

**PERFORMANCE OF BENGA ORAL POETRY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST
HIV AND AIDS IN HOMABAY AND RANGWE SUB-COUNTIES IN
HOMABAY COUNTY**

OCHIEN’G BILLY ODHIAMBO


**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the student

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university or for any other award.

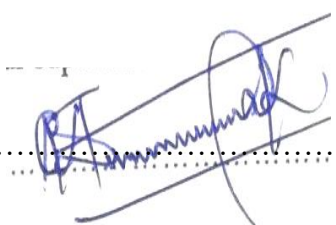
Signature:.....

Date: 30/05/2022.....

Ochien'g Billy Odhambo
MLIT/1018/14
Rongo University
School of Arts and Social Sciences


Approval by the supervisors

I/ we confirm that the work reported in this research project was carried out by the candidate under my/our supervision.

Signature:.....

Date: 30/5/2022.....

Dr. Kesero Tunai
Rongo University

Signature:.....

Date: 30/05/2022.....

Dr. Felix Orina
Kibabii Universtiy

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late Dad, Mr. Elmard Ochien’g Oluoch; Mother, the late Phelgona Akeyo Ochien’g, without whom I would not have realized this dream, and my beloved family: wife, Susan Akoth and children, Aggrey, Tishy, Ray and the last born, Ryan, for giving me the relevant support and time off during the research period.

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ABSTRACT

Many studies have been carried out on the performance of oral pieces and their rich memorable styles popular with audiences in Western Kenya, their effectiveness as tools in the fight against HIV and AIDS has remained largely under-investigated. This is the area that the present study has dwelt on. This study examines the relationship between the artist, the performance and the audience. The study also analyzes the impact on the audience with regards to HIV/AIDS. The objectives of this study are to examine how the performance of Benga oral poetry affects the fight against HIV and AIDS, analyze how context shapes language use and presentation in the performance of Benga and lastly, examine the impact that Benga performance has on the audience in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-Counties of Homabay County, Kenya. This study adopts the reader-response theory which enables us to collect and interpret data through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The study has also used the Social Learning theory which aided the analysis of the effects of the performances on the audience. In this way, the two theories complemented each other. The study utilizes the descriptive research design which has made it possible to gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations behind the audience's response and reactions. The sample includes two night clubs in Rangwe and three in Homabay Sub Counties in which Benga is performed. This study makes use of qualitative data. Primary data is obtained through interviews, observation and Focus Group Discussions. The Qualitative data from key informant interviews and observation notes are analyzed using content/thematic analysis. The study makes inter-textual comparisons between the different interviews and compares the considered elements to relevant literature. The analyzed data has then been presented in prose form. The study has found out that Benga oral poetry performances have an enormous potential in communicating messages on HIV and AIDS. The study has also found out that context informs language use and meaning that the audience draws from Benga oral performances. The study further finds out that Benga oral poetry performances are most effective in reaching a large number of youths with HIV prevention messages, stimulating social action for particular issues, stimulating public discussion and debate and changing the youths' thinking around HIV testing. This it is realized, can help model positive attitudes and behavior through characters that the audiences can bond with.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Audience: Refers to the assembled listeners at a public event such as a play, film, concert or meeting. In this study this will refer to the consumers of performances of Benga oral poetry either in night clubs, road shows or those who listen to the same from the mass media.

Context: This refers to the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood. The performers of Benga oral poetry find themselves using effective diction for different circumstances to suit their context.

HIV: (Human immunodeficiency virus); is the virus that destroys the human immune system, eventually causing AIDS. This disease attacks the body's immune system, specifically the white blood cells called CD4 cells.

AIDS: (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) this is the late stage of HIV infection which occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged by the virus. This condition weakens the immune system making it easy for any ailment to turn chronic.

Oral poetry: A form of poetry composed and transmitted by the word of mouth. They are performed verbally without the aid of writing. In this study, oral poetry refers to the verbal performances of Benga.

Performances: are acts of presenting or acting a play, concert or other form of entertainment. They involve events in which performers present their

works of an art before an audience. The audience responds either passively, by watching, or actively, by singing along or joining the dance.

Benga: A genre of musical performance, characterized by high guitar riffs, popular in Western Kenya. In this study, we will refer to the Benga performances by selected artists from Western Kenya.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NACOSTI	National Commission Science Technology and Innovation
UNAIDS	United Nation programme for AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
NACC	National AIDS Control Council
PLHIV	People Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HBM	Homabay Male
HBF	Homabay Female
RM	Rangwe Male
RF	Rangwe Female

CA₁	Club Administrator One
CA₂	Club Administrator Two
CA₃	Club Administrator Three
HBM₁	Homabay Male One
HBM₂	Homabay Male Two
HBM₃	Homabay Male Three
HBF₁	Homabay Female One
HBF₂	Homabay Female Two
RF₁	Rangwe Female One
RF₂	Rangwe Female two
RM₁	Rangwe Male One
RM₂	Rangwe male Two

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study has been organized into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the background to the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitation of the study and the theoretical framework. Chapter two consists of the literature review along the study objectives and a review of the theories that the study is pegged on. Chapter three carries the methodology employed in data collection for the study as chapter four gives the details of the data analysis. The last chapter details the summary of findings and recommendations.

1.0 Introduction to the study

This chapter begins by looking at the historical background of Benga oral performances and its popularity as a genre of literature.

1.1 Background to the study

Benga is a genre of music. Its performances and composition, just like other forms of music, are literary. Music as genre of literature has the key function, to inform its audience on various issues affecting their immediate society. The current study revolves around the performance of Benga and how its mode of performance relates with its audience. Perhaps it would be better to start this chapter by looking back at the age old question seeking to know if music can be considered as literature. Is music a form of literature? Can forms of musical performances like Benga be regarded as literary works? Many scholars have participated in this debate arguing for or against. Johnson (2018) asserts that music is unapologetically literary courtesy of its composition,

performance and interaction with its audience. Craig (2016), also weigh in to this debate saying that music is definitely literary and that the artists tell their stories through songs which are performed and also elicit response through performance. With this, Johnson and Craig qualify music as a genre of literature. Their assertion is further evidenced by the awarding of Bob Dylan, an American singer, the Nobel Prize for literature on the 13th October, of 2016. Dylan's award raised a debate because hither to, most scholars had taken the position that music would not be literature. He was praised by the Nobel committee for creating new poetic expressions within the American song tradition. This adds weight to Johnson and Craig's argument and places music as a genre of literature.

Conni (2018) says that music and literature are both part of the arts and are interconnected. She adds that, lyrics for music are nothing but poetry. That they are both part of the creative system that lends voice to the other. Musical performances therefore are literature and just like other forms of literature, play a very central role in our lives and affairs. Several critics acknowledge the distinguished role that literature performs. In an article on the fight against HIV/AIDS, Sone (2018) argues that oral performances inculcate social values and norms into the society, through purposive characterization, where the characters embody particular shared ideals that the writer wishes to support. Mirambo (2006) indicates that oral literature, whether recited, narrated, declaimed or sung has got a specific purpose to serve in the society. For over 30 years HIV has ravaged the society. To date the disease still pose grave challenges to global health (Advocates for Youth, 2015). Millions of people in the entire world have been infected with the HIV virus (UNAIDS, 2013).

The UNAIDS data puts the number of people who had caught the disease by 2013 at 24.7M. Another 1.5M got new infections while those who had passed on as a result of the disease were recorded as 1.3 million (UNAIDS, 2013). This means that Africa has the highest percentage (71%) of PLHIV worldwide (WHO, 2013). This has been attributed to greatly, according to the WHO data, by early marriages. Adolescent couples have very little or no knowledge on HIV and even means of protecting themselves. Cohen, (2002), adds that this group cannot stick to the use of protection during sex as compared to their adult counterparts. HIV and AIDS problem in Africa poses a great danger to the people living in the continent and demands serious strategies in order to save lives. A serious approach needs to be developed to counter the spread of the disease. The use of oral performances to pass HIV messages would come in handy (Ndeti, 2011). According to NACC, PLHIV in Kenya was approximated at 1.5 million in 2017, (NACC, 2018). The most current data put Homabay County ahead in Kenya. Homabay is leading with a prevalence rate of 19.6% which is four times the national average of 4.9% (Graham, 2020; *Standard Newspaper*). With these data in mind, the study settled for the two sub counties in Homabay County.

Sullivan (2018) demonstrates how children's Oral poetry acts as a positive force to fight against social evils and transform society into a better place to live in. The study demonstrates that oral literature has a function to disseminate information in the society. Performances and recitations can play this role effectively in the society. Sullivan focuses on uses of literature to combat negative values. She shows how Oral poetry was used to battle apartheid, which was a dominant ideology in the then white ruled South Africa, before elections in 1994 ushered in a majority black rule. Oester (2018) concludes that, good creative and inspiring Oral poetry should embody positive communal values, enlighten and generally inform a young reader. Ngugi wa Thiongo

(1981; p5-6) also reiterates that creative writers must always be at the forefront educating the society on potential dangerous practices that they engage in which may cause harm to their existence. Ngugi takes the opinion that at the societal level, oral poetry and literature is a creation of people's intellectual and creative undertakings; and it depicts society's tensions, conflicts and contradictions, which are at the core of community's fashioning of its identity. Ngugi concludes that the ultimate purpose of Oral performances and literature are to mould people's perspective in life as they engage daily with nature, the everyday tussles within the community itself, and the exertions within the individuals. Lastly, Easthope (2013) opines that, these musical performances offer pleasure of an intense kind where the art enriches and modifies a reader's life, imagination and perception of events.

According to David (2013), epics, ballads, prose, tales, ritual and lyric songs as genres, existed orally long before the advent of the written word. People were already singing, telling stories and reciting poems. Whenever we meet the word poetry what comes to our mind is the image of texts written in rhymes. People rarely think about that person performing in front of a big audience. Poetry, according to Fazzini (2014), goes beyond the written texts. Fazzini says, poetry can include a post on a social page in the internet, graffiti painting or a song on the radio. This means that when we think of poetry today, we should not only see as far as Wordsworth, Shakespeare, Pound and Elliot but we should stretch our vision to also focus on the beauty that resides in oral performances we experience today. Turino (2008) adds his voice to the debate saying that as far back as during the medieval times; people did not wait until there was writing before they told stories and sang songs. Gregory (2001) agrees with Turino on this. This is evidence that oral poetry has been with us over the years.

The critics mentioned above depict the significant role that Oral poetry and literature at large perform in the society. Finnegan (2018) says that oral poetry is common to human societies throughout time and space. Finnegan goes ahead to say that oral poetry is not only that which is not written. She argues that this genre should be characterized by stylistic and formal attributes like heightened language, metaphorical expressions and prosodic features (meter, alliteration etc). Our study confines itself to the oral performances expressed in Benga, a popular genre among the Luo community in Kenya looking.

1.1.1 Benga Oral Poetry- origin

Benga is arguably one of the oldest forms of oral performances in East Africa. It traces its origin to the then Nyanza province in Kenya, in the 1940s. The genre is characterized by its loud base guitar sounds and melodic singing which often breaks into a chorus. Benga has become so popular that it has spread widely outside the Luo community. Odidi and Osusa (2017) say this of Benga music: that Benga developed immensely upon the end of world war two. That it is the returnee soldiers coming back from Burma and India who brought back with them the instruments that would later be used to play and shape Benga to what we have today. The genre they say, borrowed from the English waltz and afro Cuban Rhumba before getting domesticated to using and borrowing new styles within Africa.

Benga from within Africa borrowed a lot of its performance style from Congolese Rhumba. That Jean Bosco Mwenda and Eduard Massengo's guitar plucking prowess largely influenced the present day Benga. On the name Benga, Oyunga (2017), says there are many claims as to where it originated. In his newspaper article on 19th October, 2017, he says that Owino Misiani, a veteran Benga artist claims to have named

the genre after his mother who was called Obengo Rachier. Other artists according to Oyunga, dispute this and attribute it to the Luo word Benga meaning “Beautiful tunes”. The debate however, settles with one common ground, that Benga found its way into Africa after the world war one and borrowed a lot from abroad (Odidi, 2015). The growth of this genre began in Western Kenya in the 1940s. It later adopted the traditional dance rhythms and instruments like Nyatiti (lyre), the orutu (fiddle) and later, the acoustic guitar.

The development and fame of the genre today, is owed to the pioneer guitar wizard John Ogara and his band the Ogara boys around the 1950s (Odidi, 2015). In their song Monica Ondego recorded in 1963, one notices the fusion of the traditional beats and the modern music elements. The genre also owes its growth to producers like Phares Oluoch Kanindo who took the Benga tune to all corners of Africa and abroad. Kanindo had many Congolese singers in his record label as their producer. He played a big role in incorporating the Congolese beats into Benga. Odidi (2015) adds that when the Congolese musicians started branding themselves “orchestras” and Jazzes”, Benga artists like Collela Mazee added the prefix “Dr.” To their names.

Flee and Mwendwa (2018) add their voice to this debate. Their take is that, in the 1960s, most Kenyan musicians started experimenting with the guitar-plucking and sizzling hi-hat drumming, accompanied with bass guitar riffs keeping pace with the song’s typically high pitched vocal harmonies. The experimentation included even the nyatititi (kamba nane) and created, in their words, a scenario where the solo and rhythm guitar seemed to chase each other. The pioneer artists like Ogara teamed up with Ochieng Nelly (Mengo) and took Benga to the urban centers that were growing up then. Daniel Owino Misiani teamed up with Odira Jombo and moved to Kericho. The mighty Victoria band led by the legendary collela Mazee also set up base in the then Kisumu

town. With this, Benga was born. This is an interesting genre that nobody imagined would later grow into a popular sensation that researchers and scholars would suggest as a way of solving the community's problems. From the main Benga groups of the formative years, many splinter groups came up.

Benga today is a world genre. Its popularity and wide reach has informed the suggestion that the genre be used to create awareness on HIV like other popular oral forms have been used elsewhere (Mitchell, 2006). In the vision of the proponents, performances of oral poems would help reach a wider audience. Barz (2011), Elderkin (1998), Aschcroft and Masilela (1989) all agree that the surest way to heal the scourge in Africa resides in the use of performing arts. They argue that the Abstinence Being faithful and using Condoms(ABC) strategy has failed since, after years of use, the new infections that they were intended to reduce skyrocketed instead (Elderkin 1998). According to the UNAIDS (2019), it became evident by mid 2000s that effective HIV prevention needed to take into account underlying socio-cultural, economic, political, legal and other contextual factors. Other forms of 'combination prevention' needed to be employed to replace the ABC strategy.

1.1.2 Performance of Benga Oral Poetry and fight against HIV and AIDS

Art serves many functions in the society. Apart from the aesthetic functions of entertainment, popular forms of performing arts like Benga, should be used to serve the society by creating sensitization on moral practices and how to stay away from diseases. Riding on the popularity of the genre, the fight against HIV and aids can be aided. The HIV and AIDS messages will reach a very wide audience if packaged well in these performances. The current study suggests that Benga should be used to educate its fan base on HIV and AIDS issues. One of the strategies suggested in the fight against HIV

is through the performance of Benga oral poetry. The larger objective of Benga oral poetry performance in this case would be to act as a vehicle carrying, catalysing and spreading the desired change in social behaviour. Okigbo and Eribo (2014) affirm that oral poetry performances are not beginning today. Oral performances are as old as human existence. Singhal and Rogers (2004) further add that fusing performances in oral poetry with education is not a new phenomenon. Benga oral poetry through its performance is a new concept that has not been explored. Owing to its popularity, Benga can be used to reach many people. Barsam (2004) notes that, oral performance programs are able to pull huge crowds which creates ready audience for sensitization purposes. Oral poetry performance, integrates educational issues into entertaining formats that enable health promoters to secure prime time mass media slots. The power of oral poetry performance rests in its ability to model positive attitudes and behaviours through characters with which the audience can bond (Barsam, 2004). The characters come to play an integral part in the lives of the audiences, who experience their life lessons vicariously.

One of the Benga artists, who compose songs with HIV content, is Princess Jully. In her song “*Dunia Mbaya*”, she brings out the HIV message very clearly. The title of her song loosely translates to “The world has become bad.” Listening to her lyrics, one cannot gain say the deep social messages she passes on to her audience. In this song she sings about the ravages of the disease and warns her audience that “the disease is here, it’s killing people and it has no cure.” She, in this song, enumerates some of the symptoms of HIV like diarrhoea, loss of body weight and body temperature fluctuation. Songs in this category become popular with the masses very fast.

Macgoye (1997), in her novel *Chira* explores issues such as the struggle for survival in the challenging urban environment of Nairobi and the HIV and AIDS phenomenon and how it is interpreted from both medical and socio-cultural perspectives in Kenya. The author suggests that the concept of *Chira*, a cultural belief among the Luo community, is used positively to help people cope with a new phenomenon (HIV and AIDS) in their community by contextualizing HIV and AIDS within a recognizable cultural environment and as a result provides a means of dealing with the scourge. *Chira* is in this situation used to negate the fact that HIV and AIDS is real. This has led to the catastrophic spread of the disease. It is this escapist theory of *Chira* that has dealt the communities living in and around western Kenya, a big blow. It is therefore this study's belief that Benga oral poetry can play a huge role in the fight against HIV and AIDS (Jesmin *et al.*, 2013). The *Chira* myth mentioned above raises disturbing questions about human relationships ranging from sex, gender, sexuality, marriage, prostitution, love and romance and erosion of morality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Most scholars, who have studied ways of curbing the spread of HIV and AIDS before, have suggested the use of the Abstinence Behavior change and use of Condoms strategy, which has not created any significant impact. There is therefore a need for a shift in strategy. The purpose of Arts, our study believes, should not be limited to providing aesthetic pleasure or aiding its consumers to escape from reality only, but should also help the society solve its problems. It is the position of this study that, art should help serve the needs of its consumers (audience). One such popular form of performed oral genres is Benga. Benga artists, just like other oral performers, should compose pieces which respond to the audience's tastes and needs. Studies carried out before on Benga performances have dwelt on its origin, the historical and political

nature of its themes. No study has been done on how Benga performances can be turned around to help solve the societal problems like HIV and AIDS. Our study, therefore, examines how Benga oral poetry can be turned into a vehicle that carries the much needed information to its many fans to help reduce the spread of HIV and AIDS in Homabay and Rangwe sub counties in Homabay County.

1.3 Study Objectives

- i) To examine how the performance of Benga oral poetry affects the fight against HIV and AIDS in Homabay and Rangwe sub counties.
- ii) To analyze how context shapes language use in the performance of Benga in Homabay and Rangwe sub counties.
- iii) To analyze the impact of Benga Oral performance on the audience in the two sub counties.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the research study:

- i) How effective are the performances of Benga Oral poetry in the fight against HIV and AIDS in Homabay and Rangwe sub counties?
- ii) How does context shape language use in the performance of Benga in Homabay and Rangwe sub counties?
- iii) What are the impacts of Benga performances on the audience in the two sub counties?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings in this study will create a deeper understanding between oral poetry performances and the fight against HIV and AIDS. Literature plays a major function in the society. One of these functions of literature is the passing of information and educating the populace. Oral performances have been suggested by this study as important media in the fight against HIV and AIDS. This disease has caused a lot of pain that has touched a number of individuals in the society. Its relationship with the performing arts has not been analyzed adequately. This study is therefore significant as it addresses issues that are at the heart of the society. It examines the relationship between the oral performances of Benga and the war against HIV. To achieve our objectives, our study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design which allows the researcher to use direct observation, interview key informants, and focus group discussions. This design also allows the researcher to sample and use secondary data. Our study being qualitative in nature, the researcher adopted the use of purposive sampling to get the relevant data. Our study will be significant to researchers interested in the field of oral poetry and performance as it opens a new front in the discussion of the importance of language use in oral performances and the impact of performances on the audience. This study will as well inform the county government of Homabay and even the national government's intervention policies and strategies in combating the spread of HIV and AIDS. This work will also act as a launching pad for further researches in this area.

1.6 Justification of the Study

This study is important as it looks into ways of solving a problem that is at the heart of the society. HIV and AIDS has ravaged the two sub counties of Homabay and Rangwe.

The present study posits that Benga oral poetry performances can be used to help sensitize its audience consequently helping reduce the rates of transmission. Barz (2011), Elderkin (1998) and Aschcroft & Masilela (1989), all agree that the Abstinence Behavior Change (ABC) and use of Condoms strategy has not yielded the desired fruits. They suggest the use of performing arts. It is from here that our study picks cue.

Daphne & Cynthia (2013) further argue that, oral performances have a bearing on that which the audiences will exhibit in terms of behavior. The present study therefore examines and analyses ways through which the popular genre of music, in the region under study, can be turned into a tool to help fight the disease and consequently reduce the prevalence rates. The same idea is shared by Maina (2014) who, after studying Mugithi songs, notes that it is only music that has the talismanic tendency to bridge all social gaps between people.

Our present study did not limit itself to looking at music's ability to unite people and draw large audiences, but went further to look at how oral performance can be used to create sensitization on issues ailing the society. This can be made possible if performers of this genre use diction and performance styles that communicate to their audiences. Richard (2020) says performers' choice of words is often constrained by context and meanings of the same are drawn from the contexts in which the words are used. This study is justified as it picks up from where Barz, Elderkin, Masilela and others left, hence filling the knowledge gap on how Benga musical performances can be used to benefit the society. The present study also builds up on Maina's findings on how influential music can be on its audience. Our study looks beyond the influence and suggests that oral performances can cause behavior change. Our study is also important as it opens the way for literary scholars interested in the same area of study.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is restricted to the two sub counties of Homabay and Rangwe. A sample of five night clubs will take part in the study, two from Rangwe and three from Homabay. Homabay Sub County being the administrative and economic center of Homabay County has more clubs that host live performances. The songs sampled for the study are specifically from the Luo community, who are the dominant residents of the study area.

Our study had its set of limitations as well. We sampled only those songs that carry HIV related messages. The size of the sample here was small because not many songs carry the relevant messages the study was interested in. A bigger sample would probably enhance better reliability. This was occasioned by the insufficient number of Benga songs carrying the HIV and AIDS messages. The study also faced limitations when it came to recording live performances in the clubs. Most administrators and patrons were not comfortable with video recordings. Video recording was not allowed in some of our sampled clubs. Some members who had been sampled for the FGD sessions shied off. In some cases, participants refused to speak to the interviewers terming the information sought as personal and touching on private life. Lastly, the qualitative methods used did not allow measurement of the examined problem.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is an edge of reference that forms the foundation for observations, meanings of ideas, research plans, presentation, and analysis, much as the casing that lays on an establishment characterizes the general outline of a house (LoBiondo & Haber, 1998). Our present study uses two literary theories: the Reader-response theory and the Social Learning Theory. The two theories have been adopted so that they can complement each other. The Reader-response theory comes in handy in

the study, since data collection methods used require the use of unstructured interviews and FGDs from which the study relies on the experiences of the participants, their backgrounds and interpretation of the performances that they observe or participate in. Because our study also uses observation of the performances in clubs, then there was a need for another theory which would aid the study in noting how the performances influenced behavior in the audiences. Our study is interested in examining how the audiences respond to the performances and how the performances influence their resultant behavior. The two theories are discussed below.

1.8.1 Reader-response Theory

As indicated above, this study is pegged on the reader-response theory which was propounded by Stanley Fish, David Bleich and Wolfgang Iser and gained prominence in 1960. This theory posits that the interpretative activities of readers, rather than the author's intentions or the texts structure, explains a text's significance and aesthetic value (Holland, 1975). The theory focuses on a reader's reaction to a text. It is connected to post-structuralism's emphasis on the part played by the reader in actively constructing texts rather than passively consuming them (Nasrullah, 2016).

Ninen (2020) notes that, a text doesn't exist until a reader reads and reanimates it to life becoming a co-creator of the text. According to Ninen, therefore, the purpose of a reader should be to read, examine, explain and defend their personal reaction to a text. Our study focuses on the audience and what they perceive from the oral renditions of the Benga lyrics. Our audience becomes key to our study. Reader-response theory posits that a reader is an important part of the literary work and makes it whole. Without the reader the work would be incomplete. According to Fish (1976), the theory argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates their own,

possibly unique, text-related performance. This theory opposes the position held by the formalists and new critics who do not take seriously the significance of the person doing the reading in re-creating a work. New critics say that only that which is in the text is important to its understanding - the writer's purpose or reader's feelings are not important. This study investigates how the performer's actions and diction during the rendition of oral poems inspire the audience to respond the way they do or how the audience interprets the oral pieces in their own way by giving them new meanings hence their response. Spirovska (2019) adds her voice to this by saying that the reader's way of understanding and perceptions of a literary text as well as his experience influences the interaction between him and a text.

From the foregoing, the tenets of the reader-response theory that the study has hinged on include:

- i. That which allows the readers to use inference and insight.
- ii. That which accepts the reader's background knowledge and experiences in the interpretation of a text.
- iii. And lastly that which encourages readers to work as a community to share ideas and seek common ground.

The first tenet was invoked during the FGD sessions. Our data came from the participants own inferences from the performances. They discussed what they observed, perceived and understood. We recorded the same. The study relied on their opinions and personal view of events during the performances. Each member of the FGD had their views. At the end of the sessions we looked at areas of similarities and where their views departed. We applied the same with the key informant interviews.

Without influencing their way of thinking and interpreting things, the key informants and members of the FGDs were allowed to express themselves. Through this the second tenet came was used as well. The participants relied on their own backgrounds and gave their opinions depending on how they viewed the world. Our study accepted their experiences which were recorded for later analysis. Reader-response allowed the participants to bring in their personal experiences and insights.

This theory was found to be suited for our study as one of its tenets, that which encourages readers to work as a community to share ideas and seek common ground, preambled the use of FGDs. Through the FGDs the study was able to bring groups together in small “communities” in order to share their experiences and views. The success of the FGDs relied on this.

Reader- response argues that a reader does not passively accept a text but becomes actively involved in the words woven together (Fish, 1976). The literary work depends upon the reader to assimilate and actualize it. The text works as a vehicle with a built-in Global Positional System, while the reader drives the work to the final destination.

According to Holland (1975), each reading in literature is a performance and those literary texts pose no fixed meaning. Different texts would give different meanings depending on the readers. In the same way, our study examines how different individuals and audiences interpret different performances differently. Our study discusses how the choice and use of words by the artists influence interpretation and behavior of the audience.

Our study settled on the use of this theory knowing that it has its limitations. One of these challenges is pointed out by Chris (2009). He says that, reader-response theory can pose a challenge when it presents a situation where a researcher is faced with two

contradicting answers or where there are varying interpretations. Garzon *et al* (2015), just like the other critics of this theory, says that the theory makes an interpretation of a work of art subjective.

Having considered the advantages and challenges, our study goes ahead to use the theory because, the points of concern have been mitigated through careful selection of the interpretative communities whose response form part of the data in the study. This dynamic reading process allows the reader to give out his or her own response, emotion and thoughts regarding the events and actions of characters in any text - in our case, the choice of words and rendition style of the artist performing Benga. It is worth noting that active reading, emotional and intellectual participation in the text, construction of meaning and elicitation of responses are major aspects of literature discussions.

To affirm the role of reader- response theory in application to people, Benton (1993) says that people as audience should not be looked at as tabula rasa or some empty vessels to be packed with data. He adds that people start the reading and learning process when they already have their own innate knowledge. According to Benton (1993), the reader- response theory, focuses on how readers respond to performances done by others. Our present study looks at aspects in the selected texts that constitute good fiction or drama, to which people can relate. Further, Terence (2010) adds that the theory allows the exploration of how oral poetry performances can be helpful in teaching about emerging issues in the society and those matters that are of particular interest to people within the society. Since HIV and AIDS is a current issue of concern, the study also examines how people respond to it in relation to their environment.

1.8.2 The Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. It states that individuals can acquire new behavior by copying actions of others - 'influential other' and internalize that new set of behavior (Howard & Holander, 1997). Howard and Holander add that when one watches the actions of others they are most likely to follow their behavior patterns because of the admirable things they observe in the 'influential other.' Alvero (2004) notes that the behavior of a person can be influenced by the rewards or punishments that the model's actions are subjected to. Rewards or punishments reinforce or discourage behavior (Meyer, 2003). Social Learning therefore implies all those learning experiences in which social and cognitive factors play a role.

Social Learning theory argues that individuals have four capabilities which are symbolizing, self-reflective, self-regulatory and the vicarious that they use in order to learn and interact with their environments. Through their symbolizing capability, individuals are able to transform day to day interactions into cognitive models that help to guide future behavior. This capability allows for a person to assign meaning to their environment and the events that occur within that environment.

Our study is pegged on the following two tenets of the Social Learning theory:

- i. People learn by observing others
- ii. Personality is an interaction between three factors - environment, behavior and psychological processes.

The tenets assist our study analyze that behavior is modeled by others, observed, and then reproduced (Wood, Logar, and Riley, 2015). The three scholars further argue that reward is not necessary for imitation; human beings are capable of copying sets of action which appeal to them. Social Learning theory also states that individuals are capable of aping behaviors of others when those actions are rewarded. Similarly, they will shun certain actions if they are punished. If the actions of a Model are attractive they are likely to be copied (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's Social-Learning theory gives proof that humans can learn by imitation. Bandura identifies three main processes involved in learning: direct experience, indirect or vicarious experience from observing others and the storing and processing of complex information through cognitive operations. This theory intimates that behavior is either learnt or inspired by social context (Peterson, Moore & Furstenberg, 1985). Oral poetry is seen in this light as a powerful agent in terms of behavior induction. Behavior here is learnt through imitation of the performers and their performance.

The theory puts it forward that exact vital depictions which may bring to bear a powerful vigor on individuals causing them to copy the viewed behaviors (Bandura, 1977). It is in light of this that our study holds that social learning theory has the capability to elucidate how Benga oral poetry may be used in the fight against sexual behavior that may reduce the spread of HIV and AIDS. Portrayal of the artists in the Benga oral poetry, their accomplishments, fiascos and recompenses provide the audience with convictions, deeds and standpoints that are acquired and deeds that are emulated.

In addition, the more one gets exposed to a particular set of performances the more prone they will be to duplicate the observed actions. A viewer who is exposed to a particular TV series will soon start exhibiting the actions and behavior of the characters

in the series depending on the rewards and punishments on their deeds. The theory also suggests that behavior copying is more probable when the observer feels that the performers are similar to them or are attractive (Bandura, 1977).

This theory is relevant to this study because it explains the behavioral process of why people may choose one behavioral option over another. Observational learning does not even necessarily require watching another person engage in an activity, Kendra (2021), says that hearing verbal instructions from a podcast, can lead to learning. So the audience can learn by listening, reading or hearing. In our study therefore, the audiences can learn from their influential other through listening to Benga lyrics, and watching the live performances. When Princess Jully, says *Dunia ni Mbaya mchunguze* then it is expected that her audience listens and learns from what she says. The same should happen with Okatch and Kabaselle's lyrics.

In another research by Wood, Logar and Riley (2015), this theory was ably applied and the findings were that; new behaviors largely depended on the values individuals received from a particular person, outcome or goal. This finding pointed out that, oral performers in their actions and diction play a big role in shaping the behavioral process of their audience. The audience will most likely replicate a virtue that they repeatedly hail in their performances and shun that which they condemn.

1.8.3 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the background of the study, statement of the problem, significance, justification and lastly theoretical framework. In this chapter, we have demonstrated that Benga as a genre of music, is literary since its composition, performance and even its relation to its consumers (audience) is similar to those of other literary genres like novels. Its lyrics are poetic.

The origin of the genre and why it was chosen for this study has been discussed at length. The problem statement and study's justification as well as scope and limitations encountered during the research period have been explained. Lastly, to achieve the objectives of this study, we have discussed the theories that the study has relied on and outlined the specific tenets which have been employed, to answer the research questions. The next chapter deals with the review of literature related to our present study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a review of literature related to the topic of the study. The chapter presents the empirical literature which discusses the performances of oral poetry and how these performances affect the audiences. This is done in an attempt to get a deeper understanding on how Benga musical performances affect the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. In an attempt to justify and answer the research questions, this section was done following the study objectives.

2.1 Performance of Benga music and how it affects the fight against HIV and AIDS

Oral performances have been around for a while. The ancient Greeks had the performances of the Homeric epic verses. This took place before the invention of writing. Trypanis (1981) says that the performances were important to the Greeks as they were meant to mark special occasions like weddings, celebration of victory and sometimes they were done to entertain the kingship and the gods. We read about Demodocus singing in Alcinous' palace in phaecia. Phemius just like Demodocus entertained the suitors in Ithaca. Apart from the ancient Greeks, the Muslims also have oral poetry performances for example during Ramadhan festivities where men and women gather in coffee houses to listen to performances. Even during the ancient Greek ages, oral performances were already in use and they had specific functions. This demonstrates to us that oral performances have been here for a long time. Our study seeks to examine these functions of oral performances and seeks to find out their relevance today.

Studies carried out in more recent times confirm the position held by Trypanis above. Daphne and Cynthia (2013) have argued that Oral performances have a bearing on the reactions that the audience exhibits. These oral genres have specific functions. A lullaby, for example, influences its audience to behave in a particular way, either to sleep or stop crying. A lullaby is composed with its audience, the child, in mind. It is riddled with promises, supposed gifts and sometimes threats that are geared towards making the child to either stop crying or to sleep. This is a clear case where music is used to affect change in the actions of its audience. A circumcision song would among many things, ridicule cowardly behavior and inspire the initiate to face the initiation process bravely. The choice of words used in such songs is purposive. The composer infuses words which would hurt those who haven't gone through the rite or are scared during the operation. Performers of initiation songs too employ the use of tones which ridicule those who are either scared of the process or have not taken it. The tone and diction changes when they perform lines praising the initiates.

Daphne and Cynthia, end their paper on Children's oral poetry saying that there must be a certain appeal, not in what the performer says during a performance, but in the way it is said. That, much of the appeal lies in the quality of the voice used and the skill with which the speaker manipulates the tones of the words involved. Cynthia and Daphne's work suggest that every genre has a specific function that it plays in the society. They add that the end consumers of the performed genres interpret the meaning from the performances and this leads to very specific responses. This study, to this extent, is in support of the position our present study took. Our study affirms that all forms of performances have specific functions in the society and therefore Benga performances that our study is interested in can and should be used in this regard to help the society solve its problems. This study by Cynthia and Daphne is relevant to our study as it

brings out the fact that oral performances have specific functions. Compositions are not done in vain. Performances speak to an audience and that the performer, in using his skill in performance and choosing his words well, can elicit specific responses. The present study's position holds that live performances can influence an audience to behave in a particular way. Benga live performances are pleasurable social events which engage the audience and may remain stuck in their memory for a long time. During this period they are likely to behave in a way directed by the pleasurable things they observed and can remember.

Dana *et al* (2019) notes that being in the same position as the musician can be thrilling. Audiences will tend to ape their favourite artists and copy that which they observe them do. In social learning theory, this is called 'imitating or reproducing the behavior of an important other.' This aping does not end on the dance floor. The audience may copy the same be tempted to dress and talk like the 'important other' (the performer). Dana goes on to add that people like being connected and identified with performers who are achieving great heights in life. By copying what they do and say, behavior is either learnt or changed. The study by Dana is important to our present study as it reinforces our position that performances have a great potential to shape behavior. The study by Dana however goes silent after mentioning the importance and potential of performances. It fails to look into the impacts that oral performances can have on audiences. Our study goes further and picks a particular genre of performance, Benga, and examines how its performance impacts on the audience.

P'Bitek (1974) adds his voice to the matter of the relationship between the performance and the response of the audience. He talks passionately about the relationship between performance and the audience participation. He argues that the audience naturally becomes a part of any oral rendition either joining in the singing or dancing. In his

description, he seems to suggest that in these performances, the audience and the performer become one thing as they both take part in the singing and dancing. The response to performances here are spontaneous. They are not rehearsed. It's a natural chemistry between the performer and the audience. The audience sings along and dances at the same time. P'Bitek (1974) describes a vocal rendition scenario among Acholi youth. He says boys would line before girls and dance as they move close and then away. In comparison, P'Bitek (1972), mentions the following about the Acholi youth enjoying a modern rendition in a night club. That men and women hold each other tightly and closely. Each man has a woman, they dance without shame. Lawino a character in the same book avers that she cannot dance the ballroom dance for it looks shameful to her. P'Bitek through this book brings out the idea of perversion. Dances, performances and songs have gone through a lot of dynamic changes that the audience response to renditions in night clubs is worrying. P'Bitek's work is useful to our study as the ball room experiences he describes are a reflection of what our study observed in the night clubs. Just like in P'Bitek's description, the Benga artists belt out that which their audience demands. Our position like P'bitek's is that audiences and performers influence each other to a large extent. P'bitek however looks at the performances as giving negative influences in the society. Lawino, P'Bitek's voice in the song, insists that ball room dances are shameful. Our study takes the opposite direction looking at the positive side of the ball room performances and the influences on the audience. Our study agrees that there are some aspects of performance that are shameful but overallly what the performances do to the society can not be dismissed in a wholesomely. Oral renditions have positive life lessons and offer pieces of advice and warning at the same time.

Steven *et al* (2005) says that musical performances can move an audience to tears of joy or those of sorrow. He adds that a good performer does not only convey the music's notated structure, but also its emotional meta data. Performers in a way also study their audiences so that they respond to their needs. A performer belting out notes to an audience in a funeral, for example, will know which notes to strike so as carry the tone of sadness. This will be different to another artist singing to a jubilant group after a political victory or during a political rally. A good artist just like Steven says above will capture both moods so well causing the audience to react or behave in a particular way. Stevens's view strengthens our position in this study that performances have the ability to persuade behavior change in the audience. The findings by Steven *et al*, about the affective nature of musical performances acted as a launching pad for the present study.

Maina (2014) says that it is only music that has the talismanic tendency to bridge all social gaps between people. That in a club where Mugithi performance takes place, all reticence is disregarded as patrons hitherto unknown to each other take to the dance floor and join in singing, shouting and dancing madly. Just like Mugithi among the Agikuyu, Benga's popularity has had the same effect. It would bring together people from all corners of the social divide. Maina's study talks about oral performances popularity in relation to politics. He says the popularity of Mugithi makes a tool in politics. Whereas maina's study gave music a score, for he noted its impact in the field of politics, we took a different path and sought to examine how the potential in music could be used not only to campaign and persuade audiences to vote, but also to sensitize the society and help fight the spread of HIV and AIDS.

2.2 Context and how it shapes language use during Benga performances

Richard (2020) defines context as words and sentences surrounding any part of a discourse and which helps determine its meaning. Allan (1981) goes further in an attempt to explain further what context is and adds that it refers to an occasion or environment in which a speech act takes place. This in other words can be referred to as the social setting of the speech act. Our study understands context in both ways. We look at context as the environment that a speech act finds itself in terms of the words used alongside the word or phrase whose meaning the study is interested in. Our study also looks at context as the social setting or occasion during which the oral poetry performance takes place. During the performances of Benga, the social setting plays a big role. The artist decides on the right words to use, where and when to use them depending on the purpose he intends to achieve. Oral artists consider the environment in which they are going to perform before their performances. All pieces of art must have a purpose and it is this purpose which determines the choice of words. Allan further says that diction should coincide with purpose based on the audience. This finding by Allan informs our study's position on context and how it influences the choice of words and phrases that are used during performances. We however, go further to look into how context influences the audience's comprehension of the meanings of the words and phrases used during the performances. It is our study's position that meaning creation cannot take place void of the context. Meanings of words and phrases can only be drawn within the environments in which they are uttered. The HIV messages in Benga musical performances can only be understood and made sense of, in the social context of performance. Away from that context, the messages may be viewed as lewd.

Poets use forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretation to words or to evoke emotive responses (Frow 2007; Allan 1981). The two scholars maintain that

words are spoken in certain contexts to achieve the speakers' ends. A speaker can use context to give meaning to his speech. This position is similar to the present research's affirmation that context helps poets and writers generally to communicate their messages on the fight against HIV and AIDS. It is through choice of words and phrases that a writer brings out attitude towards the subject matter. The positions held by both Allan and Frow, add flesh to our work. We hold the view that Benga oral artists make good use of word choice which in turn aid in spreading the HIV messages. The artists know which words to put where and when to say them. Their language use is expected to help make their oral rendition interesting and memorable. This now becomes edutainment.

Finnegan (2018) and Habib (2005) argue that the use of appropriate idioms, metaphors, repetition and other linguistic devices help in conveying meaning in a given speech act. The use or lack of the above mentioned styles and other elements of poetic diction often leave a poem open to various interpretations. Habib states that some poems are specific to particular cultures and they therefore respond to the characteristics of the language in which the poet writes. Performers need to study their audience well and learn their customs in order to choose words and the linguistic styles correctly. Performers and composers of Benga oral poems like other artists have to consider their audiences as they do their compositions or prepare for performances. The wrong choice of words, poor arrangement of notes and use of words in wrong contexts may elicit wrong interpretations which may complicate performances. Adequate preparation is necessary for oral performers to come up with pieces that are attractive to their fans and also to kowtow with the current issues. Just like Allan, these two scholar's work added a lot of flesh to our present work. Their study however, did not go beyond suggesting the use of the right linguistic styles from the point of view of the performer. They only looked at

context shaping the performers choice of words to use during the performance. Our research has noticed the gap and has gone ahead to look into how the various contexts presented during performances affect the comprehension and meaning making process in the audience. In any musical performance, our study asserts, the audience and performer influence each other helping each other in choice of words and what meaning to draw from the performances.

The present work is breaking new ground by examining the relationship between oral performances and the fight against HIV and AIDS. Wanjiku (2007) investigates the importance of children's poetry in education. She evaluates Pamela Kola's East Africa How, Why, and When Stories. Wanjiku explains that the stories are rich in moral, cultural and social development. She assesses the importance of diction in children's literature and how diction makes the books suitable for children. In her work, she contends that diction is key to developing a reading culture in children. Further, she avers that performances fashioned for children need to be done on the right diction for their age groups. This is in agreement with our position in this study that diction needs to be audience oriented. At the time of composition of performance pieces, an artist should bear in mind the target group in terms of their ages, education levels, gender, social hierarchy etc. Wanjiku, just like Allan, did not consider the position of context in shaping the comprehension of meaning from the texts and performances. On our part, we examine the diction used in the performance of Benga oral poetry in the selected poems in inculcating positive attributes to the people, without being preachy and immoral in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

An audience draws meaning from an oral rendition in relation to where and when it is performed. Similarly, the audience will draw meaning from oral renditions in relation to where and when they are performed. The context of any oral piece would refer to age,

social class, and environment (whether urban or rural). These factors will determine whether one will listen to, like and/or understand the performance. Styles of the time, politics and kind of instruments can also be determinants here. Richard (2020) observes that any speaker's choice of words is constrained by the context in which he uses language. Words are not entities; they draw meaning from the social context where they are used. Meaning here is deduced from the paragraph in which it has been used, from emotional associations, historical background, and political issues of the day. In his study, Richard found out that words need to be understood within their context. He says that if meaning is taken out of context then it becomes falsehood. This study helps justify our use of the reader – response theory that meaning is left for the reader to decipher from the text. This is relevant to us as we examine how context plays out in language use during Benga performances. Our work also examines the audience's interaction with the language drawing meaning out of the performances.

Lichao (2010), just like Richard contends that context is that which helps disambiguate ambiguities and detects conversational implicature. He says that in most cases words and phrases carry more than one meaning. In such scenario, the meaning should be guided by environment in which it was used. Meanings in oral performances just as Lichao states are clear when they are listened to in their contexts. Mwendwa (2001), just like Lichao and Richard above, in her analysis of the historical development of popular music among the Swahili, says that, during the performance of Taarab music, members of the audience as well as the artists performing to the audience listen with keenness not only to the music and textual message but also to the context of the performance. Consequently, the style of performance (be it in a slow or fast tempo, for instance), the unspoken communication among the performer, the performance and the audience is very critical in bringing out the various meanings and elucidations the oral pieces are

given. She says that audiences in different environments and social contexts will give different meanings to fit their unique circumstances. Her argument is that oral performances have potential to acquire different meanings not only as a result of context but also when performed in diverse time frames. Her position strengthens the position of the present study as it appreciates the role of the audience in the whole performance process. She holds the position that the artist and the audience cannot be separated and thus become one during performances. Our present work however, goes further to examine how the meanings deciphered from the oral performances affect the audience. It looks at how context during performances affect how the audience respond to the rendition and the meaning they make of the words and phrases used in the performance.

Steven *et. al* (2005) puts it that, a beautiful recital has the potential to provoke listeners to ecstasy or sorrow. The duty of the artist according to Steven *et al* therefore, is not just to deliver the song's laid down arrangement the way it is, but to also bring out its sentimental appeal. Steven verbalizes that the performers must respond musically to the state of the live audience matching their ebb and flow to maintain their interest. He adds that performers should be alive to the environment in which they are performing. Whereas Steven's study deals with the artist involving the audience emotionally, it does not examine how this emotional connection between the artist and his audience influences language use and how the same context affects the meaning the audience will make of the performance. This is one of the gaps our study fills.

2.3 Benga Oral performances and their influence on the audience

Singhal and Rogers (2002) argue that oral poetry has the ability to reach many people. The two attribute this to oral poetry's nature of composition, which they say utilizes mnemonic devices to create rhythm which appeals to its listeners. According to them,

these types of performances have a ready audience out there already enjoying the beats. These two scholars' study is very important to our current work as it informs our position on the nature of composition of oral poems, how their popularity which results from their styles of performance appeals to its fans. Benga music, the genre under the current study, like all other forms of oral poetry described by Singhal and Rodgers, make use of the mnemonic devices mentioned above to also appeal to its listeners. Benga has steady rhythmical beats accompanied by irresistible Guitar riffs that add to its appeal to its fans. The study by Singhal and Rodgers however, did not look at how the performances of the oral poems can be helpful in teaching people and creating awareness that can lead to behaviour change. The social learning theory suggests that, learning begins with developing a positive attitude towards a learning topic. Developing a positive mindset already means learning can easily take place. In this regard our present study posits that Benga musical performances' popularity with its fans can be used to create awareness on issues affecting the society it draws its fans from. HIV and AIDS messages can be packed in these songs and passed as lessons to the audience. Our position, in the present study, further states that oral poetry performances can enhance the audience to share experiences. In social learning theory this is termed as socially-supportive behaviour change. The present study utilises the Social Learning theory successfully to demonstrate that oral poetry can be used to influence behaviour in the audience. Our study goes further to demonstrate that Benga, just like other oral forms can be used to impart values in the society.

Singhal, Obregon, and Rogers (1999), point out that oral poetry performances have a high potential to educate the public on a variety of social topics like gender equality, environmental conservation and literacy. The three further assert that the educational potential of oral poetry performances has not been tapped systematically in either

developed or developing countries. They propose that the policy makers should take into account the influence that oral performances have and utilize the same for the betterment of their countries. The three researcher's findings have helped our study as they point out the importance of oral performances in imparting learning on its audiences. This is part of what our present study proposes. In our case however, we have gone further to examine how the performances influence behaviour change in the audience. This behaviour change can be influenced through learning of new ways of doing things. As the audience listens to performances, the sharing of experiences and messages passed to them through the lyrics influence the adoption of new behaviour.

Another study by Sigelman (2018) acknowledges the role that oral poetry performance occupies in guiding people to pass certain messages of importance. A web article on the site, The Free Library, entitled, 'Helping children cope with fears: using children's literature in classroom ' guidance' shows that good children's books are endowed with characters experiencing predicaments that are similar in nature to those facing children in today's society. These stories enable people to have insights of themselves as the main characters as they express their feelings about the exertions and accomplishments of these characters. Children's books are therefore powerful agents for helping youngsters develop strategies for handling their own struggles. The contributions raised above depict that good books are important to children's growth and development. They learn from what they read. These scholars' findings are of great support to the present study. The position that the literary items people interact with can influence their behaviour just like these childrens' books do to the children who read them. The findings in Sigelman's study are based on what the texts do to the audience. It does not look at the audience's response to the text. The focus in the present study is examining the impact of oral performances on the audience. Our study therefore goes ahead and

examines how the audience reacts to the performance. The audience, upon being exposed to a performance, is expected to consume it and give a response.

Freshwater (2009) adds her voice to the debate on the relationship between the performance and the audience. She says that the audience provides the performance with its rationale; that the relationship between the audience and the performance is indispensable and that the audience is of equal importance to the performance itself. She takes the position that theatre has the potential to impact, influence and even transform. She says that without the audience all this will not be possible. Our study analyses the impact of Benga performances on the audience and how the same performances could be used to impact behaviour change in the audience. This work by Hellen Freshwater was therefore an eye opener to our study. It is Freshwater's work that pointed the way for this study regarding the importance of the audience.

Kariuki (2006) examines style and meaning and affirms that style is crucial in enabling audience to appreciate the themes that he has enumerated. He establishes that audiences are hungry for more oral material on areas like science, geography and sports. However, Kariuki's work does not examine the impact that performances can have on their audiences. One of his findings on the appealing nature of performances however, helped add flesh to our present study. Kariuki suggests that there is a need to research on new topics in performances from the audience's perspective to account for their response to the performances. He had Mugithi in mind though. Our current work looks at this as a research gap that needs to be filled. This informed our study on impact of Benga musical performances on the audience with focus on how the audience responds to oral performances.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher read and reviewed literature from other studies that are in line with the topic of the present study. This was done to help the researcher identify knowledge gaps in previous studies and which the present study sought to fill. Each study reviewed had its gaps identified as shown above. The studies that have been reviewed in this study recognize the great potential that oral performances have but do not look at the effectiveness of oral forms in behavior change nor do they analyze the impact of the performances of the oral forms on the audiences. Our present study goes further to examine how Benga performances can be effectively used as vehicles carrying the behavior change information, how context during oral performances affect language use and lastly, the impact of the oral performances on the audience. The next chapter deals with the methodology that the study uses in answering its research questions in order to achieve the objectives stated in chapter one.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The present study sought to examine how Benga oral performances affect the fight against HIV and AIDS, analyse how context influences language use during performances and lastly, to examine how the oral performances of Benga impact on the audience. To achieve this, the study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design since the nature of data the study required was qualitative. This design would allow and support the qualitative methods of data sampling. The study used the thematic/content analysis method to allow the researcher identify, analyze and interpret patterns of meaning within the qualitative data collected.

The chapter is organized into research design, sampling design, study area, study population, sampling size, sampling procedure, data collection, data analysis and lastly ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

Pritha (2022) defines a research design as a strategy for answering the research questions. To achieve this, she says, the researcher must ensure that the chosen design matches the research aims. This therefore means that the researcher must begin by choosing the correct data collection tools and the data analysis techniques. The present study is qualitative in nature and therefore adopts a qualitative descriptive research design. Ngechu (2004) states that a proper descriptive research design should encompass witnessing and defining the conduct of a subject without manipulating it in any way. Research design therefore, has been looked at in this study as the overall

strategy which integrates the different components of the study in a coherent way. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the descriptive research design has been preferred in this study because it permits direct observation and interaction with the respondents which has aided the use of unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. Our study has depended on qualitative data and consequently qualitative means of collecting the data. The design is appropriate for the study because it allows descriptions and personal opinions in understanding the potentials of Benga performances as a tool for communicating the message of HIV and AIDS.

This work has adopted the use of focus group discussions (FGDs). This is a qualitative research method with a predetermined semi-structured interview led by a skilled moderator. The moderator asks questions with the intension of eliciting responses, reactions and generating discussions. This research tool was necessary because the study needed a deeper insight into the topic.

Holland (1975) argues out the benefits of FGDs in research later supported by Krueger (1988), with both suggesting that a good FGD should observe gender balance. The two also suggest that age needs to be put into consideration as youths would feel embarrassed discussing certain topics among adults. Our study considered social hierarchy in choosing participants in the FGDs because as Holland (1975) suggests, free discussion on points would only be effective if the researcher got members from the same social class. Each FGD lasted approximately one hour. This data collection method has been used elsewhere successfully by qualitative researchers like Babbie (2011). Mishra (2016) adds that, this technique is useful because it generates information on collective views, and the meanings that lie behind those views. FGDs are also useful in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs.

Since our study intended to also collect data using the observation method, interviews and carry out analysis of the collected data using thematic and content analysis method which this research design supported, the design was seen as the most appropriate for the study.

3.2 Sampling design

Skye (2020) looks at Samples in a study as fundamental parts of statistics collected to achieve an understanding of a population. He goes on to explain that sampling is done because it is not feasible to study the whole population at ago. This present study could not deal with the entire population in the two sub counties a sampling design that would enable it get a manageable representative data. The approach adopted therefore was qualitative in nature and the methodologies used in data collection are also qualitative. The researcher adopted the use of non probability based samples. Stephanie (2021) notes that purposive sampling involves picking data that is convenient for the purposes of the study. The researcher only goes for what will help in achieving the objectives of the study.

3.3 Area of Study.

The study was conducted in Homabay County specifically within the two sub-counties namely Rangwe and Homabay where the majority of youths can access the night clubs where Benga oral lyrics are popular. The research examined the potential of Benga oral poetry performances as a tool for communicating social change as far as the fight against HIV and AIDS among the youth within the two sub counties is concerned.

The two sub-counties under the research interest were preferred because they had youth from all backgrounds, both rural and urban. Both sub counties have low and middle

income settlements. The remaining six are mostly rural sub counties with sub county head quarters that boast very little economic, political or social activities. Early sexual practices, teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to pose significant challenges to people living in low and middle income settlements (NACC, 2018). The NACC in the same study puts Homabay County ahead of all the forty seven counties in Kenya in terms of prevalence rates. Homabay is at 19.6%, which NACC says is four times the national average of 4.9%. Graham (2020) confirms the same in the *standard online newspaper* article in which he says that Homabay is the epicentre of new infections.

The Luo people who are the dominant dwellers in the region love Benga music and the ‘lewder’ the lyrics the better for them. This is evidenced by the popularity of Benga hits like “Rossy” By Nyando Super Stars. This song became an instant sensation when it was released in the year 2001. Its popularity could have been as a result of the choice of words. The song dwelled so much on the body anatomy of this woman-Rossy. It’s been noted over the years that songs with lewd lyrics spring to popularity so fast. The artist says in the song that his reason for loving Adhiambo is because she has big hips, white and clean pants. This song alongside Kamaliza Majengo, Okach, Jully and Kabasselle’s songs are very popular with revelers.

The high prevalence rates of infection in Homabay and the popularity and love for Benga music by the residents made the region most suitable for the study. The study only focused on those Benga songs that carried HIV messages.

3.4 Study Population

According to Pritha (2020) a study population is a specific group of things, households, firms, services, elements or events which a researcher wants to draw conclusions about.

This is too big to work with and that is why there is need for sampling. A sample is smaller but representative of the whole. Our study was conducted in five night clubs within Homabay and Rangwe Sub-counties' within Homabay county, Kenya. The rationale for sampling the five is explained in 3.3 above. Ten key informant people were sampled for interviews. Five were drawn from each sub county. The night clubs were visited twice each on Fridays and Saturdays since these were the days live performances were hosted. Eleven songs were purposively sampled to participate in the study as secondary data. Rationale for sampling of the songs has been explained in 3.3 above.

3.5 Sample size and Sampling procedure

3.5.1 Sampling procedure

Skye (2020) explains the sampling process as method of selecting a sub-set in order to make generalized conclusions on the entire population. Sampling is essential because one can learn about a large group by studying a few representative members of the larger group. Our study being qualitative, we had to adopt qualitative means of data collection as explained earlier. The researcher purposively sampled five night clubs to participate in the study. Three of these came from Homabay subcounty while two came from Rangwe. The disparity in number was because Homabay being the administrative town in the County had a bigger population and more clubs than Rangwe. The five target clubs formed the interpretative communities. The clubs participating in this study have been purposively sampled because not all clubs in the two sub counties host live bands and again not all clubs hosting live bands host those who perform Benga. There was therefore need to subjectively choose the clubs that would aid the study in achieving its objectives.

The study also purposively sampled members of the population who would participate in the FGDs and key informant interviews. Six FGDs of eight members each, observing gender balance, age, social status and educational background, were used in the study. Two research assistants were engaged to help with the data collection and recording.

Key informant persons were sampled for interviews. Five were sampled from each subcounty. We sampled club managers were to participate in the study. All the clubs we sampled had their administrators by default participating in the study. The study also sampled songs, to participate in the study as secondary data, purposively, the secondary data.

3.5.2 Sample size

A total of forty eight members of the population were sampled conveniently to participate in the focus group discussions. Six FGD sessions were carried out. Each session had eight members. Tobias (2018), notes that a good focus group should carry between three and 21 people. Our study's use of six FGD sessions with 8 members each was therefore within the acceptable standards. Our study chose to go with eight members as this was seen to be manageable. Managing a crowd of 21 would have been difficult. The research carried out two observations in each of the selected clubs. A total of five clubs participated in the study. Ten people were sampled for interviews and lastly, eleven songs were selected to participate in the study.

3.6 Data collection

To respond to the present study's research questions, which sought to examine how Benga oral performances affect the fight against HIV and AIDS, analyze how context influences language use during performances and lastly to examine how the oral

performances of Benga impact on the audience, the researcher employed qualitative means of collecting data for analysis. The data in this study were collected using interviews of key persons, observations, FGDs and analysis of secondary data collected from music stores.

3.6.1 Key informant interviews

The researcher collected data from ten key informant persons. The interviewees were drawn from club managers, employees and others who have experienced Benga performances either in clubs or road shows. The study also sampled member of the population who have interacted with Benga either watching performances on TV or listening to the radio stations playing Benga. A social worker with vast knowledge of the two sub counties was also sampled to participate in the study. Interviews with the respondents adopted a conversational tone instead of the usual question-answer method. These were conducted using unstructured interview guides. Data from these very informative interactions aided comprehending the connection between HIV and AIDS and Benga Oral Poetry. The club administrator's interview schedule is provided in Appendix I. The recorded data was transcribed to provide textual data for purposes of analysis. The resultant data was then analyzed using content/thematic analysis.

3.6.2 Observation

The research design adopted herein allowed the study to use observation as one of the methods for data collection. Observation involves the actual site visitation to see what happens first hand and in the natural environment (Kothari, 2004). The researcher, accompanied by two research assistants, visited five night clubs in the two Sub counties of Homabay and Rangwe. The visitations were done on different dates. The research assistants helped in taking notes and recording the performances and audience responses

where permission to do so was accorded. The study adopted the non-participatory observation method to collect the required data for the study. This was found appropriate for the study because of the easy access to data and the freedom it gave the researchers to sit back, observe and record details without missing. The data was transcribed and then later translated, read as texts and subjected to thematic/content analysis. Using the reader-response theory, the researcher transcribed what he perceived from the performances. These too were put down as texts and later subjected to thematic/content analysis. See the observation checklist in appendix IV.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

The study also employs the use of FGDs to collect qualitative data. Using the heterogeneous sampling brand of purposive sampling, our study was able to identify the target group of respondents. Ashley (2017) says that a properly conducted FGD offers qualitative researchers the opportunity to interview several respondents systematically and simultaneously. The FGDs benefit our study since it creates an environment for discussion and sharing of experiences hence ensuring collection of exhaustive data. The data collected from the groups was then transcribed to give a qualitative data text. Since the data came from different groups (six), they were rearranged according to the research questions then the main ideas which occurred for each question were noted. The ideas were reviewed to identify recurrences. The resultant data was then subjected to thematic analysis. The FGD discussion guide is provided in Appendix III.

3.6.4 Benga songs sampled from stores

In order to enrich the data, the researcher already sampled Benga songs from music stores. The songs that were purposively sampled were those that carried messages on HIV and AIDS. As mentioned under sample size, a total of eleven songs were sampled

for study. The researcher noted that the sampled songs were not very current but still went ahead to use them because they carried relevant messages for the study and were still popular with the population under the study. The songs were transcribed and then translated into qualitative transcripts then subjected to thematic/content analysis reading. The sampled songs included those performed by the late Okach, Princess Jolly, Kabaselle, Nyando stars and Kamaliza Majengo bands.

3.7 Data analysis

Our study has adopted the use of content/thematic analysis method for its analysis and presentation of primary data. Content analysis came into active use in the 1950s. It became popular since it allowed researchers to focus on concepts rather than just words (Amy, 2019). Amy explains that this method of analysis can allow the researcher to conduct analysis without the direct involvement of the participants so that the presence of the researcher does not influence the results. This analysis technique utilizes conceptual and relational analysis to interpret meaning from data (Babbie, 1992). Babbie says that content analysis of data can be used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts and themes in a text and quantify their presence in an objective manner.

Jack (2020) in his article on how to use this method of analysis agrees with Babbie and Amy adding that this method of data analysis best suits analysis of data transcripts from interviews. It helps the researcher to closely examine the data to identify the common themes-topics, ideas and patterns that come up repeatedly. Jack adds that, this method of data analysis is suitable if the researcher seeks to find out something about people's views, opinions, knowledge and experience from a given set of qualitative data.

The data in our study's case have been drawn from interviews, FGDs, and observations. Our study therefore finds the inductive approach of the content/thematic analysis method the most suitable. Our data determined the themes. The secondary data have been drawn from the music stores. These texts have been subjected to content/thematic analysis.

Our analysis was done in six steps. The first step involved carrying out a transcription. The primary data from the field was transcribed in its original language of presentation. The secondary data from the music stores was also transcribed. These were then read together for familiarization and coding. The codes here refer to grouping of the data in a way that allows the researcher to see the similarities and differences in the responses gathered from the field. The third step involved grouping the coded data into themes. The researcher started by looking at the list of codes and then collated the codes into themes. The next step entailed reviewing of the identified themes to see if there were any overlaps, contradictions or redundancies. Themes that were found to be too broad were split at this stage. This was done severally until the researcher got certain that the retained data was coherent and distinctive. After this, the themes were defined and named and lastly the final report produced.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The present work was subject to certain ethical issues relating to the privacy of possible and actual participants, voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw partially or completely from the process, consent, possible deception of participants and maintenance of confidentiality of data provided by individuals or identifiable participants and their anonymity (Battiste, 2016). Mugenda and Mugenda (2011) also affirm that ethics must be observed in any study for its results to be legitimate and have

integrity. The two researchers add that study ethics protect both the researcher and the participants in the study. The researcher, in our study's case, was well aware that this study was going to be inherently intrusive and the data to be obtained could easily be abused.

The researcher was guided by a number of ethical principles: Considering that the study was carried out in two sub counties, permission from the relevant county authorities was sought and approvals obtained. This is attached in Appendix VIII.

The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity with regard to the data collected through the consent form (Appendix V). All the participants consented to the study in writing beforehand. They signed consent forms and were informed of the nature of the study and why they had been selected to participate in it. In the consent form the respondents were made aware that there would be no benefits accruing from their participation and that it was voluntary. The respondents were made aware that they had the right to withdraw at any stage during the study and that they would not be penalized for such action. The study was duly licensed by NACOSTI through license number: NACOSTI/P/19/90253/28892 (Appendix VI). The respondents were also assured that their identities would not be revealed at any stage of study and the data they give would only be used for the purpose of the study and nothing else (Appendix V).

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter three is a very important chapter in any study since it is the part that shows how the study was carried out. In this chapter, our study has discussed the research design that the study took. The research design as explained earlier refers to the strategy that the researcher adopts in order to get answers to the research questions. Our study has adopted a qualitative descriptive research design as discussed earlier. The study being

qualitative, the sampling design and even the data collecting methods automatically became qualitative in nature. We have explained how the study employed the use of observation, FGDs and interviews as the basis for data collection. Our study has also adopted purposive means of sampling because the kind of oral poems our study was interested in would not be found in all clubs and the message content of the performances would not be found in all Benga oral performances. It was therefore necessary to go for the specific data which would be useful to the study. Some Benga songs were purposively collected from music stores and alongside data collected in the study were subjected to content/thematic analysis in order to arrive at the findings. The next chapter deals with the analysis of data collected in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 Introduction

This research examines how the performance of Benga can aid the war against HIV and AIDS. Our research questions examine how effective performances of Benga oral poetry are in the fight against HIV and AIDS, how context shapes language during the performances of Benga and lastly the impact of Benga lyrics on the audience in the two sub counties. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive design because it allows the use of observation, unstructured interviews and FGDs. Our study being qualitative, has found the use of this design most appropriate. The data was collected using qualitative methods which included: observation, interview of key informants, FGDs and sampling secondary data from the music stores. This chapter analyses the data, the results and the interpretation following the three objectives of the study. The data analysis in the present study has been done using the thematic/content analysis which allows the researcher to interpret meaning from the contents of the data collected from the participants. The data is categorised into themes and sub themes and severally read for familiarization and to identify recurrence. The main advantage of this type of analysis according to Amy (2019), is that it helps to reduce the amount of data and simplification of the same while at the same time producing verifiable results. Amy further says that, content analysis gives researchers the ability to structure the qualitative data in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives. The analysis here is presented in line with the research objectives.

4.1: Performance of Benga music and how it affects the fight against HIV and AIDs

This sub chapter answers the question on how effective the performances of Benga music are in the fight against HIV and Aids. As discussed in the background, Benga oral performances began after the Second World War. It was a happy genre that was merely, then, only played for entertainment and praise (Oyunga, 2017). Benga has had a long journey. During this journey, its themes and styles have changed dynamically. It has somehow changed in style and themes, from the genre that sang about romance and praises. It has had to change from the genre that carried lyrics about love, friendship and everyday life of the community. This dynamic change in themes has been occasioned by the situation that its audience finds themselves today. The study's theory, reader-response, allows the researcher's background experiences and knowledge to impact on the interpretations of the text gathered for analysis. As a result the study was able to engage the participants through interviews and FGDs on their take on the modern styles of performance of Benga. The participants gave their own experiences, personal evaluations and thought.

Graham (2020) puts Homabay County ahead of all the other Counties in Kenya in terms of prevalence to HIV. Homabay happens to be one of the counties where Benga music is very popular. As explained earlier, this is one of the reasons why the study sampled Homabay for the study.

The study used six different groups. The FGD meetings were held on different days. They were led by a moderator who posed open ended questions eliciting free discussions among the members. The discussions were then recorded for later analysis.

One of the FGD sessions in Homabay sub county 13/06/2019



(Source: researcher)

The FGD guide was prepared to ensure that all the key exploratory areas in the study were covered. The guide comprises of predominantly open ended, deep probing questions that allowed the respondents to do most of the talking.

Kariuki (2006) says artists tailor their performances to respond to their environments. Some Benga performers have adopted the HIV themes in order to resonate with what is happening in the region and resonate with its audience base. This is what the study suggests can be used to help sensitise the audience on the dangers of HIV and AIDs. The popularity of the genre should be looked at as an advantage since it gives the ready audience.

Not all Benga songs carry the HIV messages. Our study sampled only those that carried the relevant contents. One of the songs the study found relevant was the song *Dunia mbaya* done by Princess Jully. This song carries a lot of HIV and AIDS messages and on closer look appears like a whole lesson on what causes HIV, how to keep away from

HIV and at the end warns its audience on the dangers posed by irresponsible sexual behaviour. The song also conveys advice to the infected and affected on how to live positively with HIV and AIDs.

<i>Dunia mbaya</i>	The world is bad
<i>Ukimwi mbaya</i>	AIDs is bad
<i>Utawacha watoto</i>	You will leave your kids behind
<i>Pekee yake</i>	Lonely and desperate
<i>Utakufa mbaya</i>	You'll die a painful death
<i>Kama umbwa</i>	Like a stray dog
<i>Utahara</i>	You will diarrhoea
<i>Tumbo nauma</i>	Your stomach will ache
<i>Kichwa nauma</i>	You'll suffer headache
<i>Baridi baridi</i>	You will feel cold
<i>Utakonda</i>	You'll lose body weight

In this song, Princess Jully issues a warning to her audience telling them that the “world is bad” and that HIV is here and it has no medication. She advises the youth to remain faithful to their spouses for the consequences of unfaithfulness are diarrhea, headache, temperature fluctuations, loss of body weight and eventual death. In her words she says, “*kuwa na bibi moja*” which loosely translates to “have one wife.” With this line, she implies faithfulness. To those who disregard her advice, she says that “*utakufa kama*

umbwa uwache watoto yako” which translates to “you’ll die like a dog and leave your children orphans.” The HIV messages in this performance are so clear and they are packed in an entertaining way that the audience ends up learning without realizing.

Wood, Logar, and Riley (2015), state that most learning happens as a result of witnessing another person performing some action. According to their position in their 2015 study, vices can be shunned through what they call behaviour avoidance. One observes a neighbour suffering negative consequences as a result of his action. Such a person will avoid the vice. When princess Jully enumerates the consequences of unfaithfulness and reckless sexual behaviour, her audience is expected to avoid the risky sexual behaviour that she castigates. Our interview with the key informants confirms the above. The informants agree that the HIV and AIDS messages packed in the songs they had listened to or watched in a live performance, were packaged well and communicated effectively to them. The warning and pieces of advice they got from the performances made them change their behaviour. It emerged from the interviews that Oral performances were very effective vehicles for carrying the HIV messages as the messages reached people from where they are. That one does not have to attend a live dance in a club in order to hear them. Benga is played even in the vernacular radio stations making the messages on HIV reach people even from the comfort of their bedrooms.

The research interview schedule (Appendix I) was administered on the targeted night club administrators. The interview guide for the club administrators contained six brief questions cutting across all three objectives of the study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) interview guide provides in-depth information about cases of interest to the researcher. Patton (2002) affirms that, the value of the knowledge achieved through interviews heavily relies on the interviewer’s dexterity and personality. In our case, in-

depth interviews also enabled the researcher to gain access into of the interviewees' world view in their own words. Our study was able to ask specific questions that benefited our study. Apart from the club administrators, sampled youths in the two sub counties were also interviewed (Interview schedule-appendix II). The interviews gave our study the opportunity to obtain data corroborating and filling gaps from the FGDs.

Below are samples of the responses from some of the respondents when we asked them how long they had been watching or listening to Benga and whether the HIV messages in the oral performances were effective. These interviews with the club administrators were done between the 1st of April 2019 and 30th February 2020.

CA_{1(male)}: ``ummh!...Thum Benga nachako mielo neneee.....eeeeh awachni e kind higni mag piero chiko kuchooo. Gimane tera irgi ne en kit kaka jothum rwakore. Ok ingeyo ni ndalo wa rwakruok maberni nepok ochopo ahinya... Negikelonwa style manyien mar rwakruok... Nyaka chil kawuono pod odira ka odira adhi mielo thum jogo ka gibiro ka... Thum miya mor... Paro bende moko kuomgi giholowa kuom kaka wanyalo ritore gi ayaki.

Translation:

CA_{1(male)}: ``Ummh!...I started watching Benga performances a long time ago...eeeeh say from early 90s. This is because I like their way of performances, dress code ...I love the way they shake their ... (you know what)...I never miss watching Benga performances every weekend during night hours upto now...It's an entertainment program to me... they also give out direct content and advise on the way we can fight HIV and AIDS.''

CA₂(female): “ooooh to mano doko penjo matek...anyalo paro ni osieya moro ema ne ogwela motera e kilab higni abiryo mosekalo koooo... Nahero ngufu ma jo go thum nigo ka gimiel. Gin jok ma rodonge ma agoggi opong. Mago e moko kuom gik mane ahero neon ahinya kane adhi ei kilab... miendegi bende ne mora to kod kaka gidengo ka giwer... ok aherogi mana nekech gikelonwa kastama, ooyo moko kuomgi chiwo puonj maber kaka mag ayaki ei wendegi. Mano konyo kastama to nyaka wan weg bar.... Jogo wero gik mathoth: giwero siasa, telo makare to kata mana hera. An wende sisa mitna ndi to manega tikli to gin wende hera... wee nyathiwa.

Translation:

CA₂(female): “ Oooh hard question to me...but I can recall I started attending these performances when my friend took me out for a drink in one of the night club about seven years ago....I admire the strength these people performing have. Their huge bodies, shoulders, muscles. I love watching these performances...I love their deep messages regarding HIV and AIDS they do communicate...I don't only love them because they bring customer to our club, I love them for their attempt to communicate issues affecting the society the way they are. They sing against corruption and poor leadership. The political songs please me more. When they sing about love...wacha tu...

CA₃(male): ”Asebedo ka ahi e budho ainago chakre chon ahinya...aparoni higni moko apar ga bich mosekalo. Jothumbe mangey sana osebiro gocho ka. Luwore gi winjruok, moko gocho weekend achiel moko budho...an wuonwa emane omiyo ahero Benga. Nohero thumbego kendo nomakogi gi wiye te nowerogi en owuon ka en dala. Nowachona ni ndalogi thumbego ji nohero kabisa...Benga

mitna. Jower moko duondgi mit owada...duondgi yoom...thum mit bang tich matek odiechieng mangima. Omiyo dendi yudo yweyo. Wiyi wil kata mana ni iol...an aneno thum kaluwore gi kaka odiechienga chlo. Ka ok adich ahinya to adhi ga neon miel...jothum moko miyo ji puonj koluwore gi kaka ginyalo dak kata gengo kute mag ayaki.

Translation:

CA₃(male): `` I have been watching this for a long time...I think up to now it's around fifteen years of watching the live performances in this club. Many artists have come to perform here. Some stay for long some play for a weekend and go....my father was a great fan of Benga. I was even told it was even more popular among our elders during their time''... i like their way of performances.....smooth sound...you know how sweet it is when seeing Benga performance after long day of hustle...you seem to forget you was tired...sometimes I do watch depending with my schedule...not frequently as such...but I love their message on advising people mostly youths on how to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS...''

CA₁ and CA₂ confess that they admire the performers courtesy of their physique and dressing codes. The performers therefore become their "significant other." In Social Learning theory, Bandura (1977) says that, the significant other is very important and that we learn from our heroes. People we adore. That behaviour is learnt by observing, retaining and imitating. The two are likely to have copied a thing or two from the artists. These vital lessons, the study deduces, are not limited to these two whom we sampled for the study. They are representative of many others who could not, because of numbers, participate in the study. The study therefore takes the position that, many

Benga audiences represented by CA₁ and CA₂ end up learning and adopting new behaviour from their preferred artists. CA₃ on the other hand loves Benga because his dad did. He also says that he finds it psychologically soothing after a long and busy day. Many others like him find the Benga music playing clubs as appropriate venues to wind up their day. Being an administrator, the study believes he talks from experience. All the administrators mention the important role that Benga music plays in educating the audiences in their premises. Apart from the entertainment they come to get, they end up learning sub consciously and carry vital messages home.

Respondents in this study from the FGDs agree that Benga is popular in their communities. Benga is widely listened to and that the messages they carry will reach a wide audience. The question is, whether the audience will heed to the advice given by the artist or get entertained and fail to adopt the behaviour change messages packed in the songs. On the choice of lewd words, a number of the respondents again say that it's propelled by the desire to make money. What sells today is sex and therefore incorporation of lewd lyrics would make them sell their ware. Orina (2014) says, of the oral performers among the Kisii people in western Kenya, that the Gusii composers combined traditional patterns with modern musical trends in order to remain relevant. Priscilla (2009) concurs with Orina's position saying that, to remain in business since music has become a full time employment industry, and the artists have taken to composing what the audience wants to hear and that sex sells more than anything else. This probably is the reason behind what has been viewed as subversion in Benga. The majority of the respondents however, were of the position that openly talking and singing about HIV and sex would help send the HIV message home more effectively. The subverted form makes the songs popular. It is therefore the position of our study that this subverted form of Benga oral rendition that is already popular helps reach

many people. It can be used to benefit the society instead of condemning it. This form would allow the organizations fighting HIV and sex related maladies to talk about sex, reproduction and disease openly using the songs as tools or vehicles to carry the messages to the masses (Bekalu, *et al.*, 2015). HIV and AIDS related messages are common in most oral poetry performances and have been for a long time.

The observation carried out in this study noted that some of the Benga musical performances performed in night clubs carried HIV messages. The audience though did not appear bothered by the messages. They dance on, cheer and drink. As Kamaliza Majengo's *Aluoch Nyar Jo Yiedhi* is belted out, they sing along unperturbed. From both our key informants and FGDs, the study gathered that the messages always sink in and that the revelers don't necessarily have to show it on their faces but the messages were taken home. Bajpai (2017) points out that, while oral poetry's HIV and AIDS messages are not necessarily visually explicit, they often provide information youths may not find elsewhere. From their acts and conversations the performers give the youth many unwritten and illustrated examples of how they can fight HIV and AIDS. These findings are backed up by Suwarno (2017) who observes that youths have time and again held it that oral performances are the most significant source of HIV and AIDS related information. Otweek (2015), notes that oral poetry carries in it a high and progressively more overt dosage of HIV and AIDS related content which is aimed at the youths. The proposition of this discovery is that as young people continue gaining access to oral performances the more they will be enlightened on matters HIV. After witnessing an elder sibling suffering punishment for stealing sugar, one would want to stay away from such act. This is what social learning theory is about so after watching Kamaliza Majengo's performance or listening to it over the radio or podcast, one would want to remain faithful to their spouses. The HIV messages carried in the songs are whole

lessons on how to stay alive for the youths. The FGD carried out in Rangwe center on 18th August 2019, brings this out very clearly, the after scrutinizing their contributions to find common grounds. They say that after listening to a particular warning many times, one would fear repeating a mistake. Five members confessed to have watched live performances. Those who had not visited clubs still had a lot to say from their experiences with those who had.

RF₁: Asemielo thumba mathoth ma moko wuoyo kuom ayaki matieka moko kuom heara kata siasa. An ja peng mariembo gotieno koro kastembena mathoth gin jok ma atero e bar kata agolo e bar ka atero ot. Koro bar asebede mangeny...jothumbe moko chiwo puonj kuom AIDS kaka Okach, Kabassele giri...an awuotho ka japicha. Ingeyo ni japicha ok we picha chien. Akano kondom e pikipikina...

Translation:

RF₁: I have danced to many songs talking about HIV. I visit clubs because I ride by pikipiki at night and most customers are found in the clubs... Most songs like of Okach and even Kabaselle teach us that HIV is there and has no medicine. I nowadays keep condoms on my pikipiki....

RF₂: An jathum mamora mogik en Atomi Sifa. Liedo mar wiyaniendi ne akopo kuome...asewinjo wende machiwo puonj kuom Ayaki e klabs. Gipuonjowa lakini miendegi to miyo pachwa njawore...Princess Jully and Okach Biggy wero wende mabeyo manyalo konyo oganda. An asenyaka mielo kulundeng Homabay ka bandno wero wende jully gi okach....

Translation:

RF₂: I love Atomy Sifa. I make my hair like this because I saw his. I like it... I've also heard songs on HIV in clubs. They warn us but their dances can make one do bad things... Okach and Jully sing good songs. I once went to Homabay and danced to Kulundeng Vibrators band sing their songs.

RF₃: *Nyamera maduong nende ne tiyo e bar miluongo ni "awhatmaksee" ei sinema kaa. Ne en jaus kuong. Noyudo ayaki modhero malich kodiewore ma bange to ochwe otho...aluoro klab kaka koko...ok datamra thumba moko kata ma awinjo e redio otingo puonj...*

Translation:

RF₃: My elder sister worked in "aWhatmaksee" club in Sinema Rangwe, as a waiter...she caught HIV. I saw her suffer and eventually die...I fear night clubs...I believe though some of the songs carry good information because I listen to them over the radio.

Past Studies carried out before agree with this proposition as they point out that Oral poetry performs a major role in the dissemination of HIV and AIDS allied information, feelings and deeds (Ntshwarang *et al*, 2015). One of the participants in one of the FGDs stated that HIV and AIDS associated messages especially in Benga oral poetry performances are presented in a way that is friendly and young people learn without realizing they are learning. The participant argued that the messages reach audiences from wherever they are. That, when one listens to the radio at any time that these songs are played, the messages reach them without necessarily going for a formal sitting in

order to be taught. When asked about the effectiveness of HIV and AIDS related subjects, participants said the following;

HBM₁: *“Mmmmh...thumba mag dholuogi aneno ka nikod puonj mabeyo ne joma tindo. Kendo puonj go opang ei thum ma gimielo gi mor to bende pod isieme wang’gi. Jothum siemonwa timbe maricho ma joma tindo donjoree ae to gimokoe kaka chew kendo kelonegi tho. Koro thoth jogothum kwero kendo nyiso ojende kaka ginyalo dak maber. Kaka jatich e kind oganda, angeyo maber to kendo awachoni ni tiyo gi gima chalo thum e lando injili mar HIV yotie maloyo seminar mawapuonjoe ji ka. Maka tinde ji biroe mar yudo pesa kod chiemo...”*

Translation:

HBM₁: “Mmmmh...I think Benga oral poetry is able to portray real life subjects in a pleasurable way more so for the young people to get HIV and AIDS related messages in an effective way. Benga, on the whole, brings to light the “evils” youths engage in and suggests the ways out. It paints the realist picture of how young people in the society get addicted to certain practices and fail to free themselves. I am a social worker and I’ll tell you the use of oral performances are cheaper and less cumbersome than organizing formal class lessons in the community.

RF₄: *“Aparo nit thum nigi ber mangeny e ngima ojende nikech gitingo puonj mag ayaki...”*

Translation:

RF₄: “I think Benga oral poetry contributes a lot in a teenager’s life because the songs carry words which caution them against HIV and AIDS ...”

HB_{F1}: “*Kaluwore gi siem ma joma tindo yudo e thoth wende mag Benga, onego ginge ye ni gimoro amora ma gitimo biro duogo e ngimagi. Misara mar richo en tho. Kiyiero timbe moyombore to ibiro mana romogo ...*”

Translation:

HB_{F1}: “With all the cautioning in the songs the youth should be able to see and understand what they go through and learn that there are consequences of the choices they make in life...”!

HB_{M2} who is a social worker based in Homabay gave the study a lot of insight regarding the trends in HIV and behavior change among the youths in the Two sub counties. She was sampled for the study because she has worked in both sub counties and therefore has vast knowledge in the subject. Out of her input, our study gathered that oral performances are the most suitable vehicles to use in the HIV information to the youth. She argued that seminars and formal HIV lessons are not yielding much fruits. Social workers can only reach a limited number of people according to her. If the messages are packed well in songs then many people will be reached with the life saving messages. Her contribution confirms the study’s position that oral performances are very well suited for the fight against HIV. And that lessons learnt socially would hit the youth harder so that they change their behavior. **HB_{F1}** and **RF₁** are in support of her statements.

The study examined the oral poetry in the music of Princess Jully, who incorporates a lot of HIV messages in her work. Even though Mboya (2009) describes her song “*Dunia Mbaya*” as preachy, her fans readily identify with it despite the ungrammatical Kiswahili in which the song is sang. Her fans still love her song and performance style. The hit song catapulted her to national stardom and she soon became a sensation. In

1999, during the Benga extravaganza held in Nyayo National stadium, Nairobi Kenya, she emerged the best Benga artist playing her song *Dunia Mbaya* (D.N., 1999). This is what the *Daily nation* of June 4th 1999 had to say about Jully's popularity then.

“The sensational Princess Jully of ‘Dunia Mbaya’ fame moved the crowd

With her lyrics and was declared the winner of the top cash prize of Ksh.

100,000...The judges said, Jully had carried the day particularly in terms of audience captivation and stage presentation.” (Amos, DN, 1999 pg 4)

Jully's popularity courtesy of her music cannot be gain said. It is obvious that she is a crowd puller. It is this ability that this study finds important as a tool in the war against HIV. The HIV messages packed in her lyrics can reach many people at ago. Her message is very clear; she had set out to use her singing ability, her talent to help fight the scourge that was ravaging her community. In the song, she chooses her words to suit her purpose; that of enlightening her fans about the dangers of HIV. When she asks her fans to “*tumia*” condom (use condoms) and *wacha raha* (stop irresponsible behavior), she is directly campaigning for behavior change. The greatest question here is how her audience received her messages. Do they follow her advice to change their way of life? Did they just dance to the captivating and sizzling beats and ignore her messages? This song is a true testimony that Benga oral poetry and indeed other oral performances can be and should be packaged to aid in the passing of informative messages to the masses (Mckee, 2000). There are a lot of lessons that can be learnt from the performances as the artists draw inspiration and purpose from the audience and vice versa.

Another artist whose oral performances are sampled in this study is Elly Okach, better known as Okach Biggy in music circles. The early 1990s were defining times for Benga

music in the country the genre was revolutionizing very fast. There was a remarkable shift in the mode of performance, style and even the theme. HIV was at its peak. Very little was known about HIV then. All that people knew was that, it came with irresponsible sexual behavior. With this in mind, then one would understand why Mboya (2009) criticizes this new breed of Benga poetry and its performers. He describes Okach as a disaster in waiting. He mentions in his study on Okach Biggy's music, that Okach was glorifying the very ills the government, the church and other stakeholders were working around the clock to control. Most of Okach's songs carry messages on behavior change. He sings about the risks of unprotected sex and the ravages of HIV. He composed pieces outlining the symptoms of HIV, how to stay away from the disease and even the stigma and psychological torture that victims of HIV faced in the society. In his song *Okach pod angima*, he sings:

Yawa jogi landaga ni atho to pod angima.

These people are spreading rumors of my death yet I'm still alive.

Meyer (2003) posits that new behavior is heavily dependent on values carried from a role model. The many people who thronged Donna Inn and Junction Inn to savor the flavor of Okach's songs must have been his fans. He was therefore their "special other." In social learning theory, Special other refers to the person one would readily imitate and want to behave like – a role model. These fans therefore must have taken Okach's lyrics seriously when he sang about his enemies who were spreading rumors of his death when he was still alive. They could not only have sympathized with their idol but must have as well learnt some lessons on the daily suffering that people living with HIV go through. In the song "*Okach pod Angima*," he sings about alienation, gossip and stigma that PLHIV go through. In this song he says that his death was even announced

over the radio when the truth was that he was very much alive and performing in Siaya at the show ground. He appeals to his audience in general to change their behavior towards PLHIV. Alvero (2004) says that an observer's behavior can be influenced by the positive or negative stimuli s/he is exposed to.

In yet another song, *Dorina*, Okach warns his audience against promiscuity encouraging them to remain faithful to one partner. The song is about a girl called Dorina, whom he loved well, but who turned out to be promiscuous and would be seen in clubs at night with other men drinking and at times fighting other women over their men.

Nyath maber isandaga nango?

Beautiful one, why are you breaking my heart?

Achopo yo bondo tayudo ionge

You were not in Bondo when I came looking for you

Achopo siaya tayudo ionge

You were not in siaya when I came looking for you.

Isandaga nango?

Why are you tormenting my heart?

Nyocho neni yo Bondo

You were seen in Bondo

West end oneni kikalo

You were also seen in west end club

Kata ka ngato osekawi?

Tell me if you are already married.

Nyiri masanigi kara ti uwuondowa

Girls' of today, you are liars

Kata ka ngato oseheri tichako iwuonde

You lie even to the one who loves you

Kara to ihero ji adi

How many people do you love?

Company love atamora

I refuse to share my love with anyone.

Company love neko.

Sharing of love leads to death

Nyathini tinde chodo

you've become a prostitute

Trust nochangiewoni

I even bought for you condoms

Through this song, Okach laments about beautiful girls who go cheating on their loved ones. He seems to be campaigning for the use of condoms in this song. He sings about buying trust condoms for Dorina. Through this song, Okach creates a scenario that his audience would very readily identify with. He sings about troubled relationships which he says in the song lead to death. He refers to it as company love. In yet another hit by the same artist, *Hellena wange dongo*, he sings about almost the same topic castigating sexual promiscuity and hailing faithfulness in relationships. He sings about changing his way of life and joining the church. Two denominations are mentioned here: Legio maria and catholic. He says that he has changed his way of life. At this point, it is left to our imagination how many people he inspired to change their ways and joined the religious faiths following his rallying call. When he says he has left all the beautiful women with big buttocks for salvation; his message of behavior change and salvation is expected to carry his many fans and audience along, so they travel the same road choosing salvation and ending the behavior of following women with big hips.

Awarora aseweyo chode alemo

I'm now saved I've stopped prostitution

Awarora aseaweyo kongo owara

I'm now saved, I've stopped taking alcohol

Mon mabeyo aweyo

I've stopped seducing beautiful women

Sianda gi dongo awayo I've stopped following the big hipped
women

Kata dongo kata ngielore, Even those with huge and swaying
buttocks

Jo catholic olemo kiloso kara The catholics have saved me

Chode tinde awayo I've stopped prostitution

Pamo sianda mon ema ketha gi jolemo Slapping women's buttocks was
drawing me away from my
Christian faith.

Okach, however, in "*Okach pod Angima*" sings lyrics that one would imagine are countering the messages on behavior change. He seems to be castigating women who stick to their men faithfully asking them what they expect other females to do. Where do you expect other females to get lovers? He asks in the song *Okach Pod Angima*. The same question is thrown to the males as well. If you stick to that woman and keep saying she is your alone, where do you expect other men to get love? It would be interesting to see in which direction Okach's audience would be persuaded. This song drew a heated debate among the FGDs. Some argued that the artists are hypocrites who are only interested in money and fame (Terence, 2010). This study holds that the interpretation belongs to the audience and the audience alone.

Nyako isiko ka chuori to nyiri wadu sero angoo?

Young girl, you've stuck at your husband's, where do you expect other girls to
seduce from?

Kijana isiko ma giri to nyiri wadu sero ango?

Young man, you've stuck with your wife, where do you expect other men to seduce from?

Nyathini ibernaga nyere kikwal ilosie koda kajalemo.

I find you so beautiful, girl. Create some time and talk to me, like a Christian.

Okach summarises all these lessons in his song Caleb Doctor where he sings about a doctor advising his patient to stay away from *kongo* (alcohol) and *chode* (prostitution). The doctor whom he reverently refers to as *Nyasaye mar ariyo* (the second god) apparently treats him and advises him to eat well, exercise and avoid negative lifestyle habits. The doctor gives him hope in life as he sings the words of the doctor; *ka ok mar tho to kare athiedhi* (if it's not meant to kill you, then Biggy, I'll cure you).

The position of this study is in line with Daphne and Cynthia (2013), who posit that oral genres have specific functions. The performances of Okach have a big role to play in the society. Every audience will draw their own meaning from the performances. From our interviews of key informants and also from our FGDs, we gathered that, revelers enjoy the songs when they are laced with the sex lyrics.

HBf3: *Thum ok nyal bedo thum ka pok owerwa kuondeka. Donge into ingeyo...*

Translation:

HBf3: Music is never complete if it does not mention those parts you know....

RM₁: *Thoth thumbbe ma asewinjo wuoyo mana kuom sianda, thuno kod kuondo mamoko mopondo e dend mine. Ndalogi ti ka jathum ok okawo jothum moruakore machiegni gi duk to ji ok mor kod thumbege.*

Translation:

RM₁: Most songs I've listened to talk about private parts like buttocks and breasts. You know nowadays if a musician does not employ beautiful dancers people get bored.

RF₅: *Thoth thumbbe tinde ka idwaro winjo to monego ipondi mondi kik nyithindo winj. da e odiechieng' nyithindo Tourist Hotel Homabay ma wiya nokuot gi miende kod wende mane aromogodo kucha.*

Translation:

RF₅: Many songs sang nowadays cannot be played when children are around. I took my children to tourist for a fun day and the songs played embarrassed me.

The audience should be fed on what they love most according to Maina (2014). Give them those lines carrying sex but throw in the messages therein. It's easier to learn from what one enjoys.

Kamaliza majengo, in their song '*Teresa*', just like in Okach's *Dorina*, sing about troubled relationships. Teresa is loved by the spouse who claims to give her all that she wants but she goes ahead to cheat on him. He describes her as *lando makwar chalo ombulu* (brown like a bead), *lekene okom angela chalo gi oganda mokom e puodho*. (her teeth are evenly spaced in her jaws like beans in the garden.) *Yie wiye mora kochung gi chien*. (I love the look of her hair style even from far). Just like Okach's

Dorina, Teresa is loved but still isn't settled with her man. The man says he has been looking for her everywhere to no avail (Tim, 2010). He hears rumours of Teresa being sighted in various clubs and market centres. Herein comes his warning to his audience through Teresa whom, he now calls "Angang."(Wayward girl).

Angang chama maonge luoro

A wayward girl will eat your money without fear

Angang oruma ne tin

Wayward girls have no mercy

Angang pimo oruma gojiko

They serve mercy in very tiny portions

jomoko riembo ka paro mondgi to moko riembo ka paro mond ji

Some drivers work thinking about their wives while others think fantasize about others' wives.

Jomoko lendo to paro mondgi moko lendo to paro mond ji

Some broadcasters work thinking about their wives while others fantasize about other's wives.

Kamaliza through their compositions echo the common everyday life of their society. In their next song *Achieng nyar imbo* whom they say is engaging in *Gonyo yudhe* (gives other young men sex generously). In this song, just like in Teresa, Achieng is loved but at some point starts the wayward behaviour of sleeping with other young men out of her

marriage betraying the husband's love. They sing about the consequences of such behaviour among the youth.

Gima noduogo ochwanya gi nyathigi Awinoni nogonyo yudhe

What later annoyed me was your habit of sleeping around with young men

Gima nowango iya ni iuso love iluwo jo gari

What annoyed me was your habit of following car owners

Agwelo gita tokara herana to gonyo yudhe

I'm playing guitar while my love is sleeping around with young men

My lover we kelo aibu

My lover, stop embarrassing me

Piny olokore Sodom

The world has turned in the Biblical Sodom

Iparo ni itimo ni inyala kare in ema iketho ngimani

You think you are hurting me, you are ruining your life

Ibiro diewo midhi off

You'll diarrhoea till you die

Weche gonyo youth werigo

Stop sleeping around with young men

Kamaliza says God created love and it was meant to be sweet but money and alcohol is destroying everything. Like princess Jully and Okach, Kamaliza teaches about the consequences of infidelity. One would diarrhoea till he or she dies. All the three artists say in the song that the love of money is the beginning of all problems in relationships and that promiscuity leads to HIV and eventually death. They call attention to the need for behaviour change. In their song Aluoch, they sing that “*ohand nyama mbichi nokel ni tho.*” (Selling your flesh will lead to your death.). It may therefore be true that HIV messages can best be passed through popular Kenyan music lyrics like Benga.

Ochieng kabaselle in his song, *Awino Zainabu*, appears to summarize his love-life story. This song in two parts tells the story of a beautiful woman he falls in love with. As fate would have it, he gets imprisoned. When he comes out of prison, Zainabu is missing from home. He has to look for her. He thinks of visiting Ugenya, her maternal home. The sad but captivating love story brings out the tribulations men suffer in the name of love. Ochieng does not want to lose her at whatever cost. Perhaps still smarting from the loss of previous “loves”, he ponders how to reach Ugenya to see her parents. He must get there safely and bring her back home. He sings in the song, that he fears using a boat for it may capsize and kill him before seeing his love one. Air and road travels are similarly ruled out as options. He wants to reach Ugenya alive to see his *Zainabu*. The only option left which he says he’ll take is that of going on foot all the way. It’s the safest according to him.

Okana idh kata ndiga dipo konega nono

I won’t use a bike, it may crash and kill me before I see you

Kata nyamburko be dipo kogoya piny monega nono kapok achopo neni

Even a motor vehicle can crash and kill me....

Kata mana yie dipo konyuma....

A boat may capsize and drown me...

Kata helikopta dipo kogoya piny...

A helicopter too might crash

Kata mana kanyina dipo kogweya....

I won't use even a donkey, it might kick and kill me

Gari ya mosi nyaka ugenya onge...

There is no train to Ugenya

Ochuna nyaka awuoth mana gi tienda kale. Eka dipo kachop salama nenieee

I'll have to come on foot if I am to arrive safely and see you.

Ochieng stresses on faithfulness in relationships in this song. He builds this theme preparing the audience for the anti thesis in *Rapar Zainabu*. Ochieng sings about the theme of unfaithfulness in marriages and their attendant consequences in a very entertaining and captivating way. He urges Zainabu not to lie to him. He promises to remain true to her too.

Rapar Zainabu continues with the Ochieng-Zainabu love story. It begins in a conversational tone. Though the song is done in Luo, This part is done in English. He says;

"Prevention is better than cure"

This opening statement done in English probably was meant to summarize the whole body of the message in the song. In an apostrophe, he proceeds to address questions to Zainabu (now the late) he asks in Dholuo:

Ango ma notimore?

What happened?

Nobedo nade?

How did it happen?

Awinjo ni nokoni ni iti kod kondom I'm told you were advised to use condoms.

Koro neye wich teko mari okelo tho. Now see what your obstinacy has caused

death

The mood is no longer that of romance and nostalgia. It has transitioned into sadness. The beats though similar, the rhythm has changed. It's now slower and dull depicting sadness and the gravity of the new theme. Awino Zainabu is dead. Millicento, Rosa Aoko and Atieno nyar Sakwa are also dead. Other male friends are also reported to have died. Friends and foes have died of HIV and AIDS. Ochieng mourns Zainabu sadly in this song. He now sings of death, obstinacy, recklessness. He pities his community. In this song, he warns and advises his listeners of the best practices to stay safe from the killer disease. He advises his audience to stop wife inheritance, a practice that is said to have catalyzed the spread of the disease.

Wek tero mon

stop wife inheritance

Ti gi condom

use condoms

Anyisou joluo duto

I'm telling you my fellow Luos

Ayaki matieka tieko kothwa

HIV is finishing us

Hera mit sana lakini lit ndi sama koro iiki ni ayaki ema onegi

Sex is sweet but it's painful to be buried that you've died of aids

En tuo ma kata yadhe bende onge

It's a disease that has no medicine

Lakini condom to adieri nyalo genge

But a condom can help prevent it.

He blames Zainabu for cheating on him with people like 'Jasitima'. He goes ahead to warn his audience of the existence of the killer disease. He says AIDS is real and people should take care. The artist the audience to be faithful to their partners and stop wife inheritance 'Wek tero mon' since wife inheritance is seen as one of the leading catalysts of the disease. He urges his fans to go for HIV test first before engaging in raw sex. He says the best way to protect one's self is to use condoms.

Most respondents during the FGD sessions argued that Kabasele and Kamaliza and the other artists singing about HIV aid a lot in conveying the critical messages directly to population. They singled out Kabasele for packaging direct warning and talking about the causes, ways through which HIV spreads and how to prevent it. Kamaliza warns about the consequences of unfaithfulness in relationships. Princess Jully and Okach

Biggy do the same in their songs as discussed earlier. Our study's interview with the key informants also confirmed the position held by the respondents in the FGDs. This informs our study's position that a lot of learning takes place through imitation of others and therefore the celebrities in the society like the Benga artists hold the key to helping the society fight against the HIV scourge. The respondents own interpretations and the researcher have benefited the study.

The Social Learning theory that our study adopts has aided the analysis of this sub chapter. It has become apparent that behavior is shaped by both personal and environmental factors. This study has also analyzed the songs as performed in the clubs using the Reader- Response theory and the Social Learning theory. The study has sort to demonstrate that meanings vary from one person to another (Meyer, 2003). It has also stated that there is not just one meaning 'the meaning' of a musical performance but rather meanings are multi dimensional and relative from one individual to another.

4.2 Context and how it shapes language use during Benga performances

This sub chapter will respond to the research question on how context shapes language use during Benga musical performances in the two sub counties. Richard (2020) defines context as words and sentences which surround any part of a discourse and which helps determine its meaning. He goes ahead to say that it also refers to an occasion in which a speech act takes place, including the social setting. During the performances of Benga, the social setting plays a big role. The artist must decide on the right words to use where and when depending on the purpose he intends to achieve. Oral artists consider the environment in which they are going to perform before their performances. The audience draws meaning from an oral rendition in relation to where and when it is performed. The context of any oral piece would refer to age, social class, and

environment (whether urban or rural). This is what Dasi (2016) had in mind when she defines context as that which surrounds a word or a text. In order to understand what the word means, she says we have to know something about the situation where they are used. Those different contexts affect language use and choice of words. Priscilla (2009) writes that worldwide, popular music has often been criticized for having a bad influence on young people. This judgment apportioned to these songs revolve around the lyrics used in them, the dance styles and fashion trends associated with them, which are seen as dissident and subversive to the established order. She says this while making reference to popular urban music characteristic of our urban centers and cities in Kenya.

Amri (2020), notes that it is only through context that meaning can be portioned to words correctly. Without context, simple words would be misinterpreted. Amri uses the word “bachelor” to explain this. That this words meaning can only be understood in its proper context and that without context it can be misinterpreted. This is the same scenario that artists performing Benga and other songs find themselves in. Recently, an Ohangla artist, Otieno Aloka released a song, “Meru nyar Kanye”, which trended in the social media for all the wrong reasons. The song was seen as too vulgar and insulting the female gender. The song earned him a stint in police cells. Why did Aloka get castigated and arrested? One would ask. Ohangla is just that which he sang. Original Ohangla mentions “things” the way they are. In performances, there is the poetic license which gives the artists the permission to use language in whichever way they like if for the purposes of achieving stylistic or communicative ends (Lisa, 2016). Perhaps Aloka’s sin was that of appropriateness of context.

Knowledge of the people the artist is going to address would be vital before the actual performance. The artists who chose to package HIV messages in their songs like Princess Jully, Okach, Kabassele and others did because they were aware of the

circumstances surrounding their audiences. They listened to the ground, to the problems afflicting their audiences and thus sang for them. They sang to advise and warn using the only instrument they had and knew how to use well. Benga music. Some of the participants in this study had this to say:

RM₃: *Thum rach nekech ojimbo landruok mar touché kaka ayaki. Joma dhi e klab neno kendo winjo ka jower wero wende mapako terruok kendo gineno kit miende ma miyogi gombo mar terruok. Jomatindo thoro luwo yore ma jothumgo wero maok giparo diriyo. Jothum nyaka rit dhoggi nekech jowinjogi biro mana luwogi nekech gik ma giwacho kendo gitimogo e ma neon kaka lony manyien...*

Translation:

RM₃: “I think Benga contributes a lot to the spread of the disease. When the audience sees and hear a celebrity sing, say and engage in sexually explicit acts during performance and you know these are the people they look up to as young people, then they are most likely to follow their actions and do the same things. I think Benga poetry language use and presentation plays a big role in a youth’s life because they like doing things that tend to be wrong you know, but just because it’s an “in thing”, so they continue doing that...”.

RM₄: *...ok ane rach ei weche ma jothum tiyo godo ka gigoyo thum e klab. Nyithindo onge kucha to bende magi ok gin ndalo machon mane igoyo thum e tie dero godiechieng. Jogo gocho ne joma dongo mongeyo pogo rach gi ber.*

Translation:

RM₄: ...I don’t think there is anything wrong in the language used in the clubs. There are no children in clubs. They are communicating with big people.

RF₆: ``...Mmmmh... *Aparo ni yiero weche mitiyogo kendo tiyo kodgie yo makare miyo ote makonyo ngimawa choponwa kaka dwarore. Kata ka miende seche moko ji neon ni richo, ote to chopo e yo maratiro kaka onego obedi. Jowinjo ema koro nyaka yier gima gidok godo ot.*

Translation:

RF₆: `` ...Mmmmh....I think the choice of words by our artists give messages to the youth...sawasawa (it's okay) but then in most poetry performances in most of the night clubs....heeh....Sex scenes, sex talk, infidelity characterizes their language use... sisemi kitu (I won't say anything.)....this on the other hand serves as straight talk about the real issues behind HIV.....".it's up to us fans to choose what to believe in.

RM₅:“*Eeeeh an kipacha aparo ni weche teruok ma uwinjo ei wende jothumgo puonjo jowinjo mondo oritre maber. Kik wangi weche machalo kaka sianda ka jathum owacho e yo marach ooyo jogi temo konyowa ka gi wacho wehegi ratiro kaka gin. Warang uru ote. Ka Jully owachonwa ni ‘wachung maisa’, mano ema watim. Weche ma jothum wacho kata gin mago mano gigeno ni biro konyo ngimawa. Jully owacho weche mathoth mag puonjowa mondo wabed angecha gi ayaki.*”

Translation:

RM₅: ``.....Eeeeh in my opinion....in as much as there is sex talk in the songs. They still remind the young people how to take care of themselves. The mention of “sianda”and other private parts in the songs should not be looked at

negatively. We should focus on the positive message. When Jully asks us to “chunga maisa” that’s exactly what we should do. The words used here are mostly dictated by where the singer is performing, the audience needs and the belief they hold before the performance. Like Princess Jully wanted to communicate what was in her mind about AIDS.

Our interpretation of the contributions quoted above is that the artists do not just come up with themes in their songs from nowhere. They are always well thought out and guided by the environment in which they are going to be used. The wordings are tailored to perform a specific duty - that of communicating specific messages to a specific audience in a specific environment. The word “*sianda*” for example, can only be understood in their context. The word is not used as a synonym for women but reckless sexual practices. So when an artist sings “*sianda madongo tinde aweyo*”, the message carried here is that of behavior change. The artist says he has stopped all acts of fornication. The audience will understand the meaning of the word as used in its context. As mentioned earlier in this study, behavior is learnt from “the significant other.” The Benga audience got the message and most likely changed for the better observing Okach’s facial expression and body language as he says “*sianda madongo tinde oweyo.*”

In view of the findings in the above paragraph, there is a lot that the performers can help the society achieve other than just entertainment. The artists can easily reach the people with their messages and offer teaching and positive pieces of advice. Most respondents in the study agreed that the artists provide information to youths, information that they may not find elsewhere relating to the prevention of HIV and AIDS. Learning takes place majorly through observation. Maitra (2008) agrees with this position adding that oral performers have an opportunity to give lessons to our society in a way that can only

be done through performance. Through conversation, language use, environment and characterization, Benga oral poetry performances present youths with numerous spoken and optical examples of how HIV and AIDS spread can be dealt with and how the infected can be handled.

Concern has been articulated that the HIV messages relayed to the audience through performances are partial, formulaic, and have the probability of causing harm (Ntshwarang *et al*, 2015). This is not true in the case of our study. The present study's position is that audiences behaviour gets shaped for the better after listening to and watching the performances of Benga. Social learning theory states that the portrayal of young people in the media showing their achievements, shortcomings, rewards, and punishments, present the society with templates from which beliefs, behaviour and attitudes are picked and deeds are mimicked. However, it is significant to remember that youths are conscious of the explicit images, particularly negative depiction of women (Suwarno, 2017). Some of the Benga musical performances that the audiences interact with present some lessons. The artists warn their audiences against reckless sexual behaviour. Others like princes Jully and Kabassele ask them to use condoms to protect themselves from HIV. Most of these artists perform from personal experiences and therefore the accompanying body movements and facial expressions also guide how the message reaches the audience. The songs sampled for this study were performed by the artists when, as they say in the same songs, they had learnt the hard way that HIV and AIDs is real. Okach in his performance in praise of Dr. Oduor Leo, who nursed him in his final days, sings counting the symptoms of HIV:

“kongo kongo kongo kod chode chode aaaaaa”

Alcohol, alcohol, alcohol and fornication, fornication I have refused

One notes the repetition Okach uses in these lines. He seems to be emphasising the fact that alcohol can lead one astray like it did to him. The lessons in this performance are so key that any audience would not fail to note. In Kamaliza Majengo's words, if you continue fornicating like Aluoch his ex girl friend then:

Ibiro diewo...

You will diarrhoea...

Diarrhoea is one of the symptoms of HIV and from this the artist bluntly warns his audience that fornication leads to HIV and death. Princess Jully brings this out even more bluntly singing that if you (audience) refuse to listen to her gospel on the use of condoms then *utakufa kama umbwa* "You will die like a dog." The choice of words here is deliberate. She like Okach, croons about the effects of HIV, mentioning some of the many symptoms of the disease thus;

Baidi baridi... you will start complaining of feeling cold

Tumbo nauma... you'll suffer stomach aches

Kifua nauma... Lung infections

The artists are choose words that communicate their messages directly to their intended audience. The musical performances carry messages embedded in words that are carefully chosen by the artists. Scott (2014) says that by observing a musical performance one becomes aware of the feelings of the audience. This can be seen through aspects of performance like facial expressions, body positions, gestural "body language," vocal prosody and choice of words. The situation an artist finds himself in

determines his choice of words and performance style. Similarly, the words used here are understood better in their social context.

Kneferle (2019) notes that, the immediate environment affects language use. She argues that such context effect vary with the characteristics of the language users i.e age, education level and language skills. The audience is part and parcel of any performance. Words used in any performance must take into account the age of the audience, education level and language skills. Performers as a requirement have to study their audience in order to know how to perform, which words to use. This came into play during one of our observation exercises in this study which took place in Nyanza night club in Homabay on the 16th November 2019. We got an opportunity to observe the band play a remix of the song, “Rossy” originally done by Nyando Stars. The moment it came on air, the agitation among the audience could be noted. A number of people rose and went to the dance floor. Some sang along from their sitting positions. It was obvious that the song was popular with them. They joined in the performance by cheering, dancing or singing along. At the climax, when the lewd lyrics started “pouring out,” the club went into frenzy. The audience’s facial expressions displayed the joy and gladness with which they welcomed the song. Their dance styles encouraged the performers on and in return more lewd lyrics were sang much to their delight. When the performer sings the chorus:

Voice 1: *Gimomiyo awero nyako*

The reason I am singing in praise of this girl

Voice 2: *Adhiambo to sianda*

She has big buttocks

Voice 1: *Adhiambo ok awer ne sianda*

I am not only praising her because of her buttocks

Voice 1: *An siruache mora molo*

Her panties make me happier than anything else

Voice 2: *Adhiambo to ler ga*

Adhiambo is a clean girl

The female patrons were not left behind. They danced wildly to the beat of the music and ululated, obviously enjoying every moment of the performance. Immediately this song ended the patrons whistled and shouted asking for more. Whenever a song that did not carry the lewd lyrics was played, the patrons would sit down perhaps waiting for another song with lyrics like those in “Rosy.” The sex laced words are seen to aid the connection between the artist and the audience. They repeat the words “*sianda*” and “*siruaru*” without feeling shame. These words and the other “dirty” phrases have relevance here. They are used in the right context. Their meanings and intended functions are achieved. In one of the FGDs, this matter of songs carrying lewd lyrics came up. A member, who confirmed that he had attended a live band, in which songs carrying similar words and phrases were played, concurred with our observations in Nyanza club. He gave a description of what he experienced, a year before, in Mega Club in Homabay.

...such songs make people go wild in the club. I have attended one before here in Homabay. People demand for them. The musicians know this so when you request for them you pay money.

This member further said that, he did not blame any musician for their work and the audience is free to pick whatever lesson they want from the performance. The other members in support argued that during performances, revelers should be able to pick what to learn and what to ignore. In support of this a member mentioned other songs such as *Marehemu zainabu* and *Dunia Mbaya* done by Kabaselle and Princess Jully respectively. It was agreed that these are great songs that people loved listening to and that they carried great lessons for the audience and that these lessons were woven in the songs using words dictated by context.

The messages in the songs carry vital lessons which the audience learns from. It is therefore the position of the present study that language is central to social interactions in every society. Contexts determine the meaning that an audience draws from a performance. Language shapes social interactions and social interactions do the same. Appropriate choice of words by artists can help communicate vital issues to the society and make them change their world view and even behavior. Artists who find themselves in a society where drugs are rampaging the youth or a war torn society should compose songs that carry messages on the dangers of drugs or the importance of peace. Our study posits that the message will sink deeper and wider in that society. Consequently Benga performers who find themselves in communities ravaged by HIV and AIDs should be encouraged to use their songs to communicate to their people. In this case, context dictates the themes performances. Through the present study's social learning theory, the audience will learn from the performers and their performances. This position is supported by Garten (2019), who says that language and social interactions have a reciprocal relationship and ends up shaping each other. Performances and their related contexts are in real relationships. The context shapes the dictions while the audience

gets meaning through the context. In short, the knowledge of the audience and the context is a prerequisite for any meaningful discourse (Amri, 2020).

4.3 Impact of Benga musical performances on the audience

This section responds to the research question on how the musical performances of Benga impact on the audience. A musical performance is an organised presentation of musical sounds usually for entertainment, edification or enrichment of its audience. An audience therefore refers to a group of people passively listening to or actively participating in the musical performance. Audiences react differently to different performances. Davies (2020) notes that performances are often determined by culturally defined boundaries and therefore the audiences must be conditioned to understand the norms of the performance and their role as consumers of the performance. He further explains that an Indian audience listening to *Alapa* (traditional Indian performance) would quietly snap along with the rhythmic beats while a symphony audience is expected to maintain strict silence until the performance comes to the end. This is different from what one would observe in jazz as here the audience might chatter and drink beverages as the performance continues. Benga audiences just like the jazz audiences follow no strict rules. It is even easier for them as they may choose to remain passive and sip their beverages as they watch the performances or choose to be active participants dancing wildly to the rhythmic beats.

North (2015) while conducting a study on the influence of music on consumer's behaviour found out that music has a strong influence on what commodities people buy. Specific songs plant concepts into a person's memory ultimately shifting preferences and buying behaviour. Musical has that appeal to the mind. A song can appeal to people to behave in a given way. Songs are used even in political scenes. In

politics songs are used to urge people to vote in a particular way thus influencing their choices and creating euphoria. The audience will in most cases copy the performer and do exactly that which they say or do. When a musician appeals to his audience to behave in a particular way, it is certain that a large number of them will be influenced to follow his way. The social learning theory, which the present study is hinged on, posits that people learn from influential personalities in their environment. It therefore follows that an appeal for a change in behaviour will be taken. Messages in Benga songs that appeal to sexual behaviour change reach the people and persuade them to change. Santosa (2010) says that performances affect the way audiences construct their worldview. Performances, according to Santosa, are deeply influential in the creation of fundamental social values like in-group integrity, unity and peace. This is a demonstration that art is not an autonomous entity. Art is valued by people as an integral domain with other social activities. Art therefore becomes part of the society's everyday life. Oral performers compose songs about their communities and which communicate to the same communities teaching values and passing the same values to the next generation.

Oral performances and the audience are interdependent. The oral performer is encouraged by the audiences' reactions and response while at the same time the audience gets triggered by the performer's use of language (Steven *et. al*, 2005). Performance is therefore a give and take affair. In this whole arrangement, the audience, apart from the entertainment can also learn and shape their world view as suggested above by Santosa. Benga audiences in the same way influence performance as the performance imparts vital lessons into them. The Benga songs sampled for this study carry HIV and AIDS messages which the performers use in giving lessons to their audience. This was demonstrated in one of the sessions with an FGD in Homabay when

the matter of the performance influence on the audience came up. This is what some members had to say:

HBM₃: *...wayudo puonj mathoth ahinya koa kuom jothumbewa mag Benga. Gine ranyisi ma nyithiwa makiny biro kopo. Giwachnwa adieri ma ok wanyal yudo kumachielo.*

Translation:

HBM₃: ...audiences learn a lot from the artists. They are their role models. They give lessons we cannot get anywhere else.

HBM₄: *Jothum wacho adieri kaka en. Koro en tijwa kaka jowinjo mondo wayier gima wakao kata mwaweyo. An tinde ok awuoth maonge kondom ei kabeda. Jully nopuonja maleer...*

Translation:

HBM₄: Musicians articulate issues the way they are. They don't sugar coat anything. Its upto us listeners to pick positive lessons and ignore what we believe isn't right. Nowadays i don't walk without a condom in my wallet. Princess Jullu teaches that clearly...

HBF₅: *Wende Okach nokonyo wuonewa saidi. Nopuonjogi kaka onego giwere kod chode nekech chode kelo ayaki matieka. Kaka wende mar "Hellena Wange Dongo".Weche pod konyowa nyaka kawuono. Wakopuru weche mabeyo majothum wach jodalawa. Kata mana Jully nowero wende mar Ayaki cha e sa mowinjore kabisa. Johera mage nonego owinje.*

Translation:

HBF₅:..Okach sang songs that taught our fathers how to protect themselves from AIDs. The songs are still relevant to us today. As the singers perform, the audience should copy good values. Jully's songs came at the right time when Aids was killing people...her audience should have listened...

From the above conversation, our study got an insight on what goes on in the minds of the audience. Our study holds that behaviour is modelled from our heroes in the society. **HBM₃** confirms that as an audience he learns a lot from the performers. He goes ahead to urge others to heed the positive pieces of advice the musicians give. As North (2015) argues that music can be used to persuade people towards a given preference, we note that Benga artists can influence people using their messages to change their sexual behaviour. **HBM₅** agrees with this position adding that the Benga gave vital lessons in the past and continues to teach life lessons today. **HBM₄** confirms to the study the influence that the performances have had on him. He did not use to carry condoms in his wallet before but after listening to and watching live performances of Princess Jully he says, *...an tinde ok awuoth maonge kondom...(...nowadays i don't walk without a condom...)*. This demonstrates a change in behaviour which has come about as a result of a musical performance. Music is that appealing. Our study finds out that music has the potential to make people change their behaviour patterns or worldview as Santos puts it. To further demonstrate this, the present study looked at **RF₁**, who like **HBM₄**, has had remarkable changes in her behaviour pattern after experiencing a Benga performance. She says *...an tinde awuotho ka japicha. Ok awe picha chien...(...I nowadays walk like a photographer. I don't leave my camera behind)*. She compares herself symbolically to a photographer who rarely leaves his trade tools behind

whenever he goes out. By camera, she symbolically refers to a condom. Her statement therefore means: she always carries a condom with her wherever she goes. What is important to this study is when the decision to start walking with the “camera” began. As she says, this was after experiencing a musical performance. This is testimony to the fact that music can influence the audience to adopt a new way of thinking and behaviour.

There are many other examples like **RF₂**, who has taken to shaving like a Benga musician called Atomi Sifa. This he says happened after watching him perform. He fell in love with his hairstyle. This artist therefore became his role model. There is that attempt to imitate the artist and look like him. This is social learning taking place. Our study also took into account the case of **RF₃** who swore never to step into a club because her sister who worked in a club in Rangwe died of HIV and AIDS. The lyrics of Jully ring in her mind and make her associate the death of her sister to promiscuous sexual behaviour. **HBF₁** summarises this by saying that he has learnt one big lesson that, *...misara mar richo en tho...*(wages of sin are death). Wood, Logar and Riley (2015) say that personality develops as a result of the interaction between three main factors: environment, behaviour and psychological background of a person. This speaks to our second tenet of the social learning theory in this study. From the above discussion, this study takes the position that, artists influence their audiences behaviour and way of life and even dressing and style of performance (Wood, Logar and Riley). They would then form what Albert Bandura calls the Significant other. Once this connection sets in, then all that they do and say will most likely be copied and imitated by their fans. Like in the case of **RF₂**. **CA₁** and **CA₂** also mentioned in this study earlier, say that they love the dressing mode and physique of the artists they watched performs. This strengthened our study’s position that aspects of performance like costumes and

style of performance play a huge role in shaping the audience's world view. From the above discussion, the study was able to realise that the audience and the performance are like twins and are interdependent (Manieson *et al*, 2012). In whichever way oral performances manifest themselves, either in dirges, festivals, naming ceremonies, poetry recital or folktales, the performer and the audience always merge as one and see the performance as a communal activity.

Our study has sampled an expert in the field of social work who has worked in almost the entire county and has a lot of information, the study took her seriously. Her statement suggested that audiences will readily copy the performer's lifestyle, and implement what the performers say in their songs. She seemed to suggest that the influence could be either way- positive or negative. Our study noted her stress on the ability of oral performances to influence the behaviour of audiences.

Manieson *et al* (2012) says that the artists have a great duty to educate and influence their audience positively. The scholars add that, depending on the type of audience, the performer's choice of words and body language is determined. That the audience will learn from their icons. The people they look up to. The potential of Kenyan oral performances, like Benga, as media through which information can be passed on to the masses should be taken seriously. Courtesy of their wide reach as a result of their popularity, Benga oral performances can reach audiences and influence them to behave in a desired way.

4.4 Conclusion

This section carried out the analysis of the data collected following the research questions outlined in chapter one which asked how Benga musical performances impact on the audience. The section dwelt on the audience, their interaction with musical

performances and the result of those interactions. We sought to know whether the interaction between the audience and performance can cause change in behaviour among the audience. The study found out, as demonstrated above, that musical performances are powerful tools that can be used to persuade the society in a desired direction. Using Benga Performances, therefore the society can easily get sensitized on HIV and AIDS issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine whether the performance of Benga can be used as an effective tool in fighting the spread of HIV in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-counties within Homabay County. Our research questions examined how effective performances of Benga oral poetry are in the fight against HIV and AIDs, how context shapes language during the performances of Benga and lastly, the impact of Benga oral performances on the audience in the two sub counties. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive design. Data for the study was collected through observation, interview of key informants and FGDs. Secondary data was also collected from music stores. The study relied on two theories: The Reader response and the Social Learning theories. The data obtained was analysed using the thematic/content analysis.

This chapter summarises the findings from the analysis done in chapter 4. The chapter also contains the conclusions to the study, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

5.1.1 Performance of Benga music and how it affects the fight against HIV and AIDs

Benga as a genre was found to be popular with the people living in the area under study. Some Benga songs carry messages against the spread of HIV and AIDS. The study found out that these HIV and AIDS themes emanating from Benga oral performances are an effective tool in the fight against the disease. This study's findings are in accordance with Mckee (2000) who considers oral poetry as social education when

entertainers can sing about sexual abstinence and modifying sexual behavior, while performing. The participants who took part in our study agreed that the social education content in the oral performances could not be gainsaid. The recorded forms of these performances are not stored on some shelf somewhere like a book. They are, courtesy of their popularity, played on air in the many vernacular radio stations and at times on the mainstream national radio and Television stations. This has ensured that the oral performances reach the masses even in their bedrooms ensuring the wide reach mentioned earlier. This has also seen educative lyrics like in Kamaliza Majengo's, Kabaselle, Okach and Jully's songs get a wide audience as it penetrates even into the peoples' living rooms and even bedrooms. So, at the end of the day, one needs not visit a club in order to listen to a song and consequently, the HIV messages reach people everywhere at their convenience.

5.1.2 Context and how it shapes language use during Benga performances

The present study found out that social setting determines the language that a performer uses. The audience also comprehends the words and phrases used in the same context. The environment that the performer finds himself or herself, determines the choice of words that will be used. The participants in the study agreed that choice of words used by musicians is necessitated by circumstances. Word, phrases and sentences get meaning and relevance from contexts in which they are used. Social setting plays a very big role in choosing the kind of messages or words to pass. (Richard, 2020). The present study found out that the performer's use of language is dictated by context. The audience on the other hand infers meaning from performances in the contexts in which the performances are carried out. If the context changes then the meaning of the words and performances also change. This position is also supported by Amri (2020) who adds

that the same word used in a different environment, a word would acquire a totally different meaning.

Our study also found out that this contextual shaping of language has aided the fight against HIV since the artists use the right words at the right place and for the right audience. The information that otherwise would scare people is brought to them while nicely clothed and coated in exhilarating beats. The audience then ends up dancing as they learn. This, the study suggests creates an interesting learning environment where in most cases people learn unconsciously. This has answered the question on the aptness of the oral form as an educative tool in the fight against the disease. These study's findings are supported by Singhal & Rogers (1999) in the field of poetry education who argue that oral poetry can be used as a strategy that involves people in the preparation of a campaign. Further, they say that oral poetry performances have been found more effective in motivating individuals to talk to each other about what they learned from poetry messages. The scholars also say that oral poetry messages enable individuals in what they call socially supportive behavior change. This assertion is in accordance with the study findings regarding language use, how context affects language use in Benga oral performances and their relationship with the fight against HIV.

5.1.3 Impact of Benga musical performances on the audience

Lastly, the study investigated the impacts of Oral performances and their influence on the audience in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-Counties in Homabay County. The finding here was that the performances influences behavior change in audiences. Knoferle (2019) in a different study found out that musical performances have the potential to appeal to an audience and change their preferences in terms of what to buy and the prices to pay. Mwendwa (2001) in another study notes that performances and

expressions can create an environment for appreciation of various cultural practices from different communities, and even aid in behavior change. Knoferle and Mwendwa's findings confirm the finding in this study that the musical performances influence the audiences causing them to change their behavior patterns.

Benga oral performances were also found to resonate well with the contemporary inclination of young people's issues of sexual relationships. It was realized that through the oral performances the youth had gained a better understanding of the consequences of sexual decisions on their lives. As seen in Okatch, Jully and Kamaliza's music, discussed elsewhere in this study, Benga oral poetry creates consciousness on the kind of behavior, including sexual promiscuity, use of protection during intercourse, sexual exploitation, and alcohol abuse which can make young people more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS.

The study's findings on influence of Benga oral poetry performances on its audience are in agreement with the basic assumptions of the social learning theory as stated in a study of Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), the young people pick, interprets and interacts with the messages from the oral poetry performances. They react to the messages in order to speak to an emerging sense of themselves

5.2 Conclusion

This study has analysed the performance of Benga oral poetry and how it affects the fight against HIV and AIDS. Based on the findings, this study concludes that, Benga oral poetry has immense potential in communicating important information as far as HIV and AIDS among the youth in Rangwe and Homabay Sub-Counties. Benga oral poetry can be used to entertain, educate as well as inform the public on HIV and AIDS issues. The performances used in oral poetry are effective in communicating the said

messages among the listeners as it appeals to their minds and emotions. Benga oral poetry can and should be used to create awareness on the kinds of behaviour, including sexual involvement and alcohol abuse that can make people more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. The same oral performances can and should be used to educate the youth on the current challenges facing their societies. Benga oral poetry's choice of words, draw audiences into the centre of the sexual relationships among rural and urban youths against a background of continuing the fight against HIV and AIDS infections.

The findings of our study are in tandem with the basic tenets of the theories on which it was anchored. Social Learning theory as a theoretical framework supporting this study provides solid theoretical reasons to consider that oral poetry can play an important role in influencing the fight against HIV and AIDS in Rangwe and Homabay Sub-County. Benga performers should be encouraged to pack their performances with HIV and AIDS messages to teach and sensitise their audiences. The performers should also be made aware that their audiences copy from them and therefore they should always give out positive performances. Social cognitive theorists demonstrated that imitation and identification are the products of two processes. The first is the observational learning where observers can acquire new behavior simply by seeing those behaviors performed. The second is inhibitory effects where seeing an artist or your favorite character, for instance, being punished for deviant behavior reduces the likelihood that the behavior will be emulated by the observer. The study also relied on the Reader-response theory to analyze and draw meaning out of the primary data collected in the course of the study.

Thus this study has shown that oral performances are a useful tool in communicating values to the community. Benga oral poetry performance should harness its enormous potential to influence individuals and society in a positive way in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations can be made.

1. There is need to incorporate the performance of Benga in the fight against HIV and AIDS as it has demonstrated that it has the potential to reach many people and has the potential to influence them to change their sexual behavior.
2. Benga artists should be encouraged to produce more performances with the messages geared towards helping the masses change their sexual behavior.
3. The Benga artists should be educated on the importance of context so as to intensify the fight against HIV and AIDS. They should take the messages to the right places and group of people.
4. There is need to sensitize the performing artists on the new trends and how important they, their language use and their performances are in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends that in future other researchers interested in this field can look into;

- i) The effectiveness of literacy works (written works) other than poetry works in the fight against HIV and AIDS in Kenya.
- ii) Similar study to be replicated in other Counties in Kenya apart from Homabay County. Using songs popular in those counties so as to compare the findings.

iii) The potential of oral performances on radio and/or television platforms in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CLUB ADMINISTRATORS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Have you watched the Benga oral poetry performances?

.....
.....
.....

2. How long have you watched the performances? **> 5years** **< 5 years**

(Tick appropriately)

3. In your opinion, are Benga oral performances suitable in communicating HIV messages?

.....
.....
.....

4. What in your opinion, do you think has motivated the Benga singers, who sing about HIV, to use words communicating HIV messages in their songs?

.....
.....
.....

5. Do you think the Benga oral poetry performances have been effective in communicating HIV and AIDS messages among the youth?

.....
.....
.....

6. Do the audiences in these performances influence the way the performance takes place in any way?

.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Do the artists influence their audiences in terms of behaviour?.....

.....
.....

8. How can Benga oral poetry performances be improved to achieve its objectives of educating and entertaining?

.....
.....

Thank you for your time, co-operation and assistance.

APPENDIX II: YOUTHS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Have you watched the Benga oral poetry performances?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. How long have you watched the performances? **> 5years** **< 5 years**

(Tick appropriately)

3. In your opinion, are Benga oral performances suitable in communicating HIV messages?

.....
.....
.....
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.....

4. What in your opinion, do you think has motivated the Benga singers, who sing about HIV, to use words communicating HIV messages in their songs?

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.....

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.....

5. Do you think the Benga oral poetry performances have been effective in communicating HIV and AIDS messages among the youth?

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.....

6. Do the audiences in these performances influence the way the performance takes place in any way?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Do the artists influence their audiences in terms of behaviour?.....

.....
.....
.....

8. How can Benga oral poetry performances be improved to achieve its objectives of educating and entertaining?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time, co-operation and assistance.

APPENDIX III: FGDs DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Welcome, consent process and introduction

a) Welcome

Good morning/afternoon/evening and welcome to our session. Thanks for taking time to join us and talk about Benga oral performance hand HIV/AIDS in Homabay/ Rangwe Sub County. I am.....and I am going to be your moderator today. We should all feel free to express ourselves since this study depends on your personal experiences and observations for its success.

b) Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations read out to the participants assuring them that the data gathered from them will **ONLY** be used for the purposes of this study.

c) Consent Process

We are going to go through the consent form as a group before we commence. Make sure you understand why we are here and be sure that you are participating voluntarily. Should there be any questions, they should be raised at this stage.

d) Self introductions

Members carry out self introductions.

e.) Ground rules

- The session will last approximately 1 hour.
- Respect for others opinions
- Talking in turns

- Any other depending on members.

2. Discussions begin (tape recorded)

A. Tell me about your experience with Benga oral performance.

- Area to probe
 - Where the performance took place.
 - Language use
 - Style of performance and its effect on the audience.
 - Costumes worn by the artists and their effect on the audience.

B. Audience response to the performances

- Areas of probe
 - Use of words and phrases carrying HIV messages.
 - Audience response to these words in the song

C. Language use in the Benga oral performances

- Areas of probe
 - Context viz language use
 - Audience viz language use

D. Oral performances and behavior change in the society.

- Area of probe
 - Influence of the performances on the audiences behavior.

That marks the end of our discussion today. Thank you for creating time to share your thoughts, opinions and experiences with us.

APPENDIX IV: OBSERVATION CHECK LIST

**NIGHT CLUB ARTIST PERFORMANCE AND AUDIENCE RESPONSE
CHECK LIST**

CLUB:.....**DATE**.....

SUB COUNTY.....

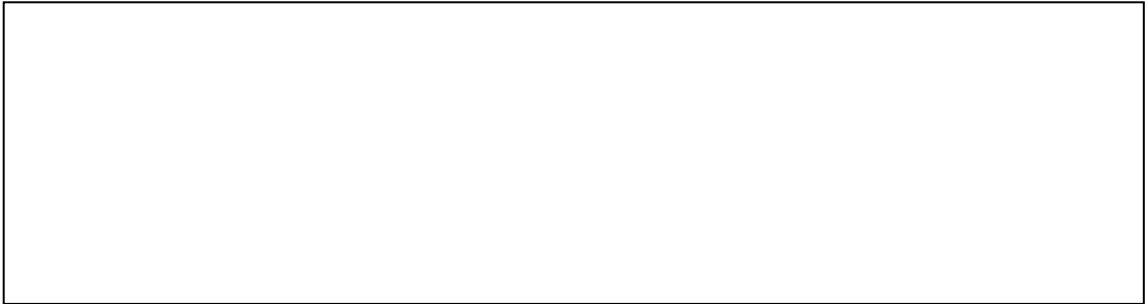
TIME.....

1. ORAL PERFORMANCE

- **Performance styles**
- **Costumes worn by artists**
- **Observable influence on the audience.**

2. AUDIENCE REACTION

- **Do they join in the performance?**
- **Does the artist's style of performance and costumes influence the audience?**
- **How does the audience react to the mention of HIV messages during the performances?**



3. PERFORMANCE

- **Comment on the artists' language use.**
- **Do the choice of words and phrases influence response from the audience?**



APPENDIX V: CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

ABOUT THE STUDY

This study seeks to examine the potential of Benga oral poetry performances as a tool for communicating on the fight against HIV/AIDS among the youth in Homabay and Rangwe Sub-Counties in western Kenya. The rate of prevalence in Homabay County as a whole is the highest in the whole republic of Kenya. This study seeks to find out if Benga Oral performances can assist in mitigating the scourge. This study therefore seeks to examine the effectiveness of the said performances and also find out if these performances can influence positive behavior change.

STATEMENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

I have been invited to participate in the research study: Fight against HIV using the Performing Songs: Benga Oral Poetry in Homabay and Rangwe Sub County. I have read what the study is about carefully. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and I've been answered to my satisfaction. I consent freely and voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:.....

SIGN OF PARTICIPANT.....

DATE.....(DAY/MONTH/YEAR)

STATEMENT BY THE RESEARCHER

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the information they will give will only be used for the purposes of the study and that confidentiality will be observed.

I confirm that the participant was given the full information about the study and all the questions asked were accurately answered to the best of my ability.

I confirm that the individual accepted to participate in the study freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this form has been given to the participant.

NAME (of the person taking the consent).....

SIGN (of the person taking the consent).....



DATE(DAY/MONTH/YEAR)

APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. BILLY ODHIAMBO OCHIENG
of RONGO UNIVERSITY, 103-40404
RONGO, has been permitted to conduct
research in Homabay County

on the topic: PERFORMANCE OF BENGAL
ORAL POETRY AND THE FIGHT AGAINST
HIV/AIDS
for the period ending:
1st April, 2020

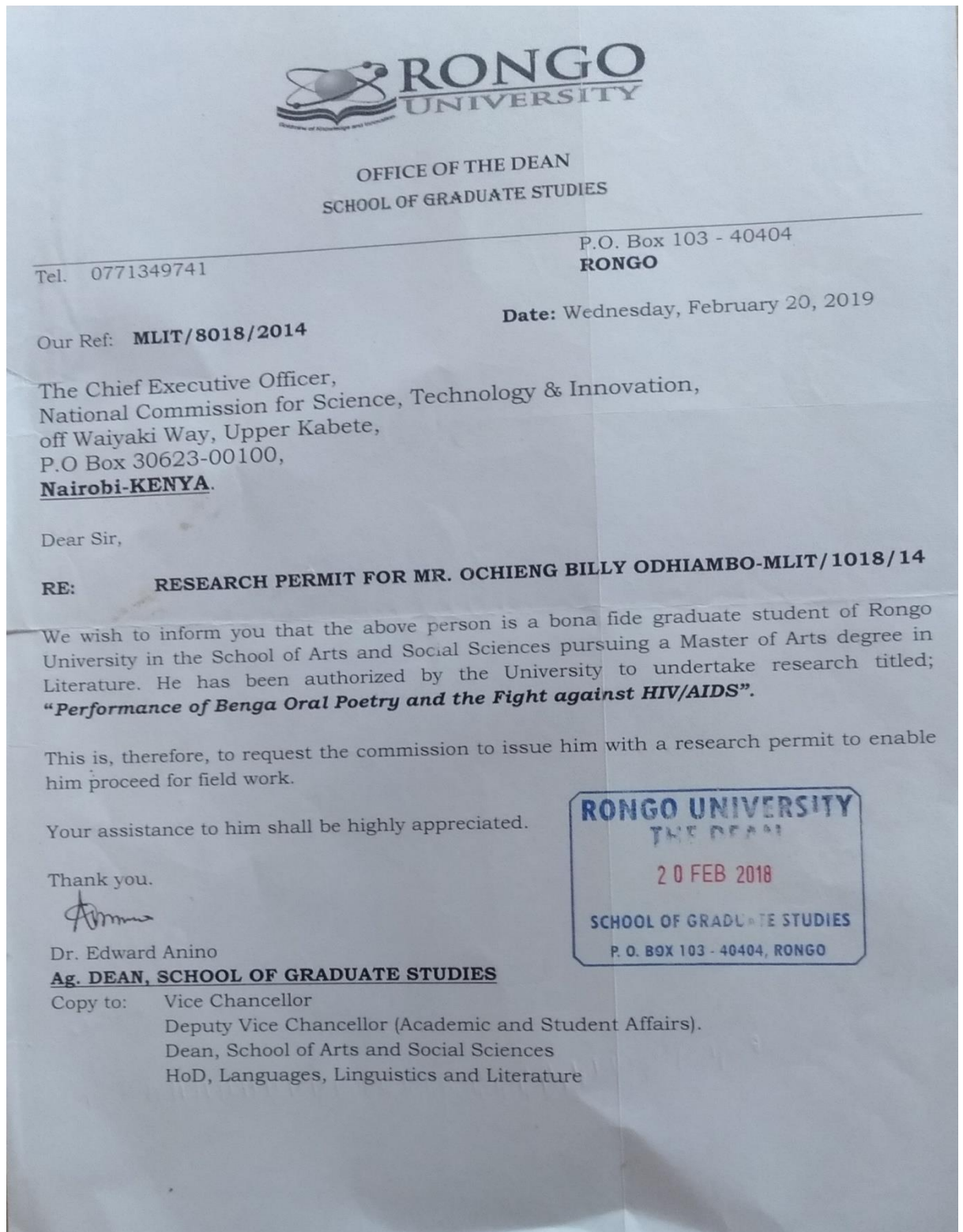
Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/90253/28892
Date Of Issue : 3rd April, 2019
Fee Received :Ksh 1000



Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

APPENDIX VII: RONGO UNIVERSITY LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



**APPENDIX VIII: M.O.E RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION-HOMABAY
COUNTY**

APPENDIX VIII: M.O.E RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION-HOMABAY COUNTY

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Homa Bay
Telephone: Homa Bay 22313
When replying please quote
Reference.....
FAX.NO.059-22487.

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
HOMA BAY COUNTY
P.O. BOX 710
HOMA BAY

E-mail:cdehomabay@gmail.com

19/04/2019

REF: CDE/HBC/ADM/VOL.1/40

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESAERCH AUTHORIZATION FOR BILLY ODHIAMBO OCHIENG

The above named student of Rongo University is planning to undertake research in Homa Bay County. His research topic is "*Performance of Benga Oral Poetry and the Fight against HIV/AIDS*"

He has already been granted permission to do the research by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and the County Commissioner, Homa Bay.

I also hereby do give authority for the same in Homa Bay County. The same expires on 1st April, 2020.

Kindly accord her cooperation and necessary assistance.

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

HOMA BAY COUNTY

P.O. BOX 710-40300, HOMA BAY

Email: cdehomabay@gmail.com

NYABERA O. RICHARD

FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

HOMA BAY

APPENDIX IX: LETTER OF REQUEST TO THE CLUB MANAGEMENT

P.O. BOX 23-40300,

HOMABAY.

24TH MAY, 2016

THE MANAGER.....

P.O. BOX

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO VISIT YOUR CLUB

I am a Masters student of the Rongo University. I am currently carrying out a research on “Fighting HIV/AIDS using the Performing Song: Benga Oral Poetry in Homabay and Rangwe Sub Counties.” Your club has been identified to participate in this study being one of the few in which the kind of performances targeted by the study take place.

I request that you allow us visit your club for purposes of conducting interviews and observing the live performances. All data collected from your premise will only be used for the purposes of this study. It is my prayer that you will grant my request, thanks in advance.


Yours Sincerely,

BILLY ODHIAMBO OCHIENG

RONGO UNIVERSITY STUDENT

CELL: 0703509119

APPENDIX X: NACOSTI AUTHORIZATION



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/19/90253/28892** Date: **3rd April 2019**

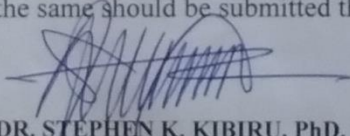
Billy Odhiambo Ochieng
Rongo Univeristy
P.O. Box 103-40404
RONGO.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Performance of Benga oral poetry and the fight against HIV/AIDs.”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Homa Bay County** for the period ending **1st April, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Homa Bay County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.



DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Homa Bay County.

The County Director of Education
Homa Bay County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO9001:2008 Certified

APPENDIX XI: TABLE SHOWING THE SAMPLED SONGS

S.NO.	ORAL ITEM	COMPOSER
1.	Okach Pod Angima	Elly Okach
2.	Dorina	“
3.	Hellena Wange Dongo	“
4.	Caleb Doctor	“
5.	Dunia Mbaya	Princess Jully
6.	Awino Zainabu	Ochieng Kabaselle
7.	Rapar Zainabu	“
8.	Achi Maria	“
9.	Aluoch Nyar Joyiedhi	Kamaliza Majengo
10.	Achieng Nyar Yimbo	“
11.	Rossy	Nyando stars